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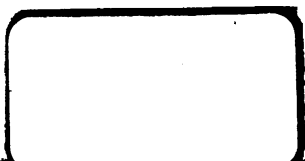
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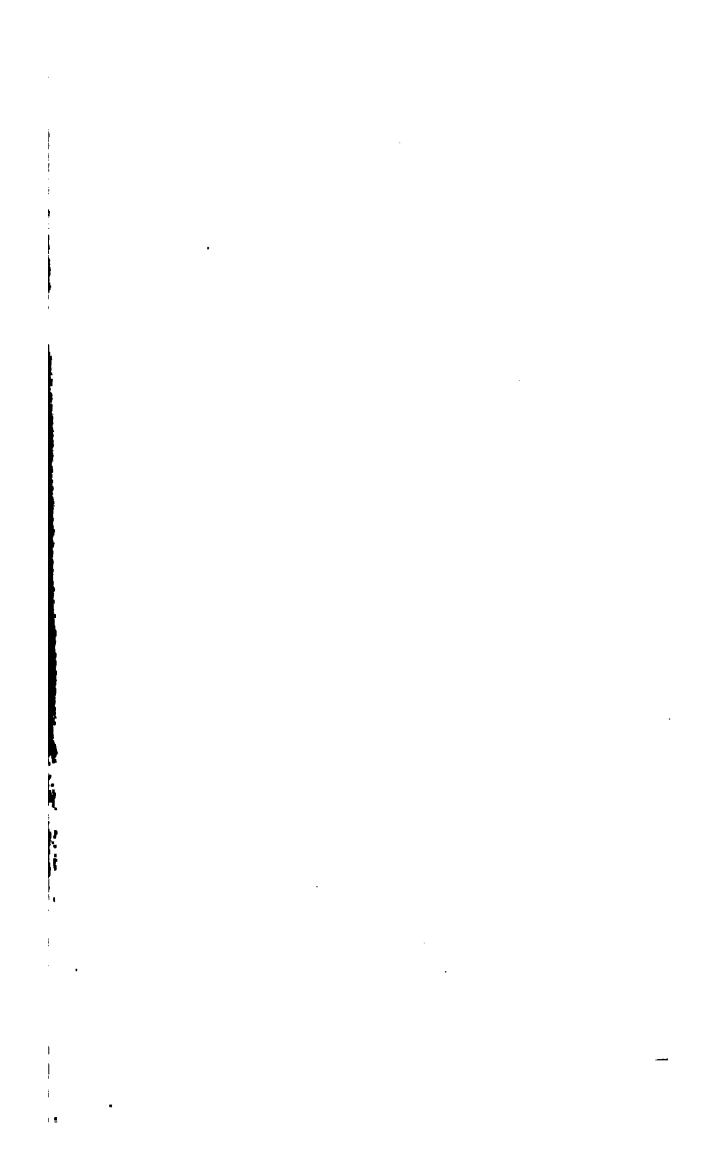


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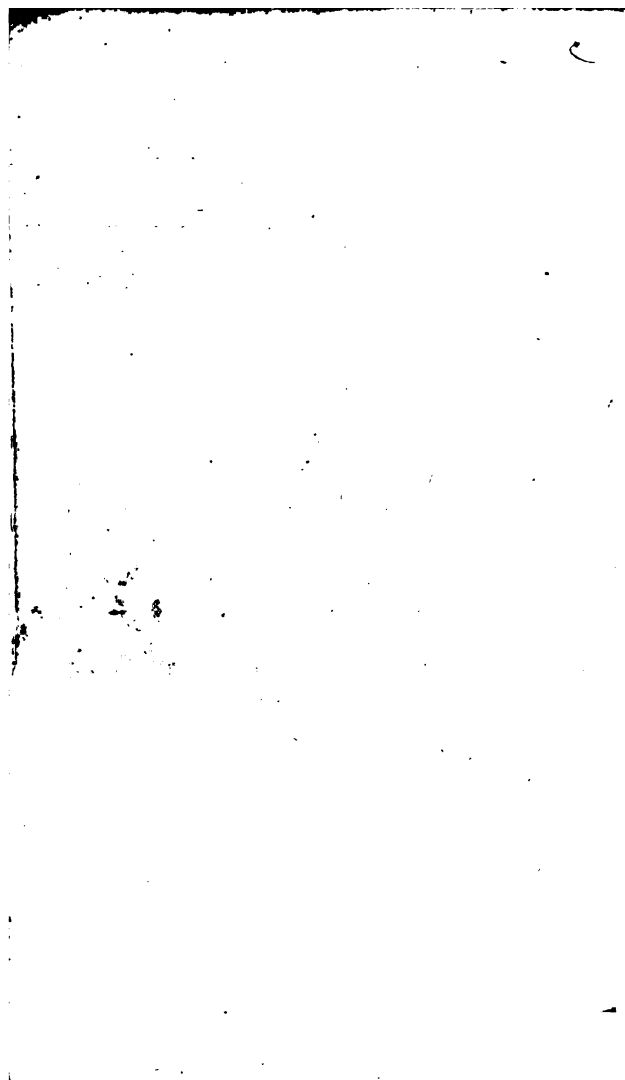


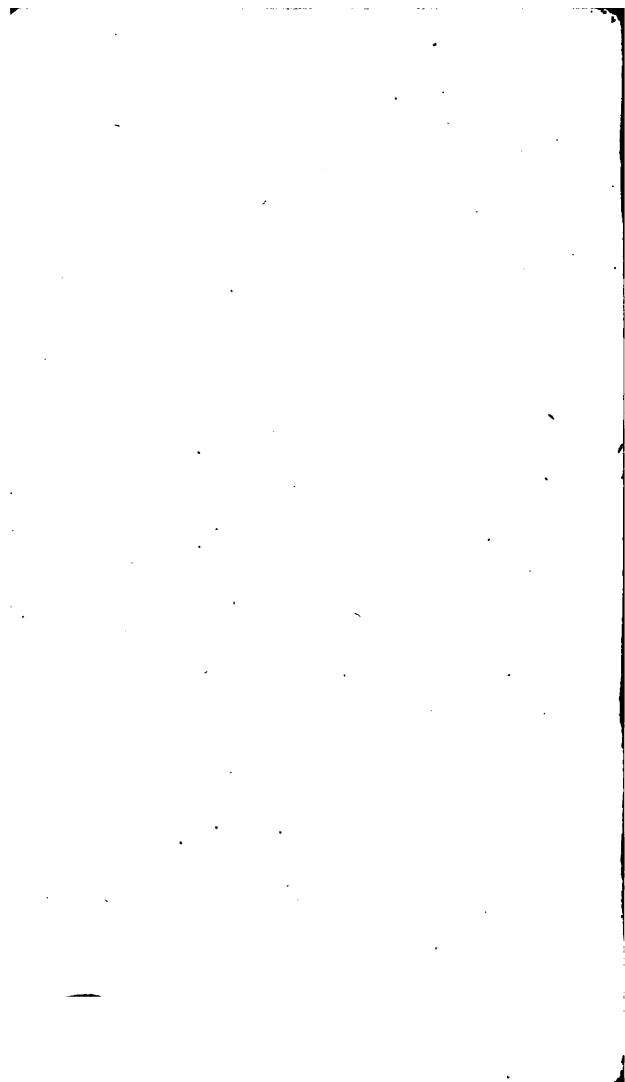
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THE
DUTIES
OF
RELIGION
AND
MORALITY,

AS INCULCATED IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES;

WITH

PRELIMINARY and OCCASIONAL
OBSERVATIONS.

By HENRY TUKE.

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CONTENTS.

PREFACE.

PART I.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

CHAPTER.	PAGE.
1 On the importance of Religion and Morality	1
2 On Religion as the Basis of Morality	6
3 On the Love of God, our neighbour, and ourselves, as the Principle of religious and moral Duties	10
4 On the Holy Scriptures, as containing the best Precepts for religious and moral Duties	14
On the Divine Attributes	22

PART II.

RELIGIOUS DUTIES.

1 On Faith and Hope in God	26
2 On the Love of God	31
3 On the Fear of God	35
4 On religious Meditation	39
5 On Watchfulness, and waiting upon God	43
6 On Prayer	47
7 On Thanksgiving and Praise	53
8 On Public Worship; and the appropriation of one Day in the Week for this purpose	58
9 On Obedience and Patience	65
10 On Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ	72

CONTENTS.

PART III.

MORAL DUTIES.

CLASS I. GENERAL DUTIES.

CHAPTER.	PAGE.
1 On Justice, including Honesty, Veracity and Sincerity	97
2 On Love or Charity	32
<i>Its effects in promoting -</i>	
<i>Mercy and Compassion,</i>	
<i>Candour, with liberality of</i>	
<i>Sentiment and Conduct,</i>	
<i>Almsgiving,</i>	
<i>Peaceableness,</i>	
<i>Forgiveness of Injuries,</i>	
<i>Hospitality,</i>	
<i>Friendship.</i>	
3 On Humility	165
4 On Meekness	111
5 On Temperance	175
6 On Chastity	119
7 On Discretion or Prudence	127
8 On Industry or Diligence	136
9 On Frugality	133
10 On Cheerfulness	136

CLASS II. PARTICULAR DUTIES.

1 Of Husbands and Wives	140
2 Of Parents and Children	144
3 Of Masters and Servants	148
4 Of Magistrates and Subjects	150
5 Of Patriotism, or the Love of our Country	157

PREFACE.

TO promote sincere and solid piety, with sound and pure morality; and at the same time to show, how forcibly these most interesting objects are inculcated in the writings which are justly called, the Holy Scriptures; are the views with which the present publication is introduced to its readers. The author is sensible that publications of this nature, by much abler pens than his, have already appeared; but he has not met with any work exactly upon his plan. To collect the principal passages of Scripture on the leading Duties of Religion and Morality; and to intersperse a few remarks and observations, tending to illustrate and enforce the precepts which are taught, and to make them read connectedly, appeared likely to convey instruction of the greatest importance, and, at the same time, to manifest the excellence of the Bible, as being in both Testaments, what the Apostle says of the Old, "profitable for doctrine, for reproof for correction, for instruction in right-

teousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

If there should be any Book on the same plan extant, it is presumed, that to these subjects we can scarcely have our attention too often turned: so that as every new publication may be supposed to attract some readers, it is hoped that a benefit will accrue from being reminded of the important duties which are here recommended; and when we consider that many publications which issue from the press, are calculated to lay waste moral and religious principles, it certainly behooves the friends of Religion and Virtue, not to be backward in using every means which they conceive to be right, for counteracting the effects of those poisonous principles, which a philosophy, "falsely so called," is administering to the depraved taste of too many Readers.

In preparing this work, the author has to acknowledge himself indebted to other publications, and particularly to Gastrell's Christian Institutes; a book, which though capable of some improvement, is excellently adapted to show, how each religious and moral duty is inculcated in the Holy Scriptures,

The author thinks it proper to state, that his original view in writing this book, was

principally for the Members of the religious Society to which he belongs, the people called Quakers : but in prosecuting the work, he was induced to hope, that the benefit arising from it would be more extensive than was at first designed. In this hope he was strengthened, by apprehending it not necessary to inculcate any precepts or duties, but what are approved by Christians in general, and which are of universal importance.

It may appear to some readers, that considering their importance, the subjects of this volume are too briefly and slightly treated. Brevity has, indeed, been the author's study : but, at the same time, he has endeavoured to avoid a slight and superficial treatment of his subjects. How far he has succeeded, must be left to others to determine. He has reflected, that a small volume at a moderate price, will be likely to obtain more readers, than a book, the size and price of which are much greater. In addition to this consideration, he apprehends, that subjects treated concisely, if with perspicuity, make a deeper impression on the mind than when they are treated with diffuseness. For these reasons the author is inclined to hope, that the smallness of this volume will rather increase than lessen its utility : and when he considers, how much

of it is not his own, but taken from the writings of Divine Inspiration, he trusts that he shall not be liable to the imputation of vanity, for indulging a hope, that it will not fail to convey instruction, important and beneficial to every reader.

In the close contemplation, which the writing of this work has produced, on the various Duties of Religion and Morality, the author has frequently had to feel his own imperfections. He has, however, been careful not to regulate the standard of those duties by his own practice; but faithfully to represent them, as he found them inculcated in Holy Writ. To give precepts superior to example, is a difficulty which, on the present occasion, has not been unmet, but it may be remembered, that even an apostle wrote, "not as though he had already attained, either were already perfect;" and it seems that we must, though attended with some degree of imperfection, be permitted to "provoke one another to love and to good works," provided the sense of our defects be united with this resolution of the same Apostle: "This one thing I do; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

PART I.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

CHAPTER I.

On the Importance of Religion & Morality.

WHETHER we take our view of the importance of Religion and Morality from theoretical reasoning, or from experimental observation, I believe the result of each will show, that the greatest portion of happiness which the human mind is capable of enjoying, is to be found in the performance of our religious and moral duties; the duties which we owe to God, to ourselves, and to one other. For if we believe (and these observations are written on a supposition, that the reader agrees with the author in believing) that there is a Supreme Being, who by his power and wisdom created, and by his Providence superintends the world, the performance of those duties which we owe to this Divine and Omnipotent Being, may reasonably be considered as the surest means of obtaining his favour.

The situations of men in this world are exceedingly various: but whatever may be

our station, or whatever the degree of prosperity or adversity, which an allwise Providence may see meet to permit or assign for us, the surest foundation for human happiness, is to have our minds and conduct so regulated, as to afford a humble hope, that, as far as human virtue can go, we may look up to the Divine Being, with a degree of holy confidence in his fatherly care and protection; whether we consider that happiness connected with a grateful enjoyment of the blessings which we receive, or with a patient resignation to the Divine will, under the want of some of the comforts of life, which his Providence may have withheld, or taken from us.

Again, when we consider that the regulation and subjection of our passions and natural propensities, tend much more to the comfort of life, than the unrestrained gratification of them; and that the performance of our various relative duties is essential to the enjoyment of those comforts which arise from a state of society; we shall see great reason to believe, that an allwise Providence has rendered the performance of our duties essential to the happiness of a being, who is designed to stand pre-eminent over all the works of creation in this lower world.

Let us now turn from theory to observation and experience; and let us first trace

OF RELIGION AND MORALITY. 3

the history of nations, as transmitted to us both by sacred and profane writers, but particularly by the former. Here we may see, that as the fear and service of God, and the practice of the moral duties, particularly of justice and mercy, prevailed, such nations were distinguished by the Divine favour and blessing; but where irreligion, vice, and oppression, gained the ascendancy, whatever might be the exalted and powerful state of such a nation, or in whatever degree of favour with the Almighty, these people might have formerly stood, they were either totally annihilated, or in some other manner become singularly marked with a just retribution. But we need not have recourse to ancient times, to discover the lamentable consequences of irreligion and immorality; our own times afford us ample proof, either of the natural effect of these evils, or of the judgments which they bring upon nations and people; and if my apprehension is right, the miseries which these evils bring upon mankind, may be considered as often proceeding, both from a natural and a supernatural cause.

If from nations we turn our attention to individuals, we shall find, by accurate observation, that, although virtue and vice do not meet with their full reward in this life, that they whose minds are brought under the

4. ON THE IMPORTANCE

influence of religion and virtue, experience, even in this world, a greater share of happiness, than is the lot of those who abandon themselves to a disregard of moral and religious obligations.

But while I am setting forth the advantages which result, even in this probationary state of existence, from a life of piety and virtue, I do not forget, either the inward conflicts, or outward sufferings, which are frequently the lot of the righteous. Such has been the severity of these sufferings, as to draw forth this declaration, from one who partook largely of the tribulations of the gospel; "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, then we are of all men most miserable." But although in one point of view, this was an undoubted truth, yet, even in these extreme cases, the true christian finds something which outbalances all his sufferings, in those enjoyments of divine peace and comfort, which generally accompany afflictions for the cause of religion and virtue. Thus the same experienced Apostle, who made the foregoing observation, also says; "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." When, therefore, we take into consideration the various circumstances attending the righteous; and compare them with the consequences at-

OF RELIGION AND MORALITY. 25

resulting from irreligion and immorality; I believe we shall find, that, even in this life, generally speaking, the miseries of vice are greater than the trials of virtue; and that the enjoyments which attend a virtuous course of life, far exceed the gratifications resulting from vain and sinful pleasures.

In the foregoing observations I have not extended my views of the beneficial effects which result from religion and virtue, beyond what is experienced in this short and uncertain state of existence; but when, to the consideration of those advantages, we add the reflection, that it is by the exercise of that faith, and the practice of those works, which the christian religion requires, that a good foundation is laid against the time to come, and an eternal inheritance secured in that heavenly kingdom, where "there shall be neither sorrow nor pain;" we shall find abundant cause to unite with the Apostle Peter, in that excellent and important testimony which he bore to the beneficial effects of religion and virtue; for both these, I apprehend, are included in this observation; "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

CHAPTER II.

On Religion as the Basis of Morality.

THERE are many in the present day, particularly of those who call themselves philosophers, who strongly recommend the practice of, at least a considerable part of the moral duties; but do not inculcate any regard for religion, and the duties which it requires. They vainly rely on human reason and strength; and endeavour to build a system of morals, without laying its foundation on those religious motives and considerations, which are, by others, believed to be essentially necessary, for strengthening the mind in the practice of true virtue. That man is prone to evil, needs only individual observation to prove: and when he can vainly persuade himself that there is no God, to overlook, to reward, or to punish his actions; or if he can make himself believe, that the evils or miseries, which result from the disregard of moral obligations, and from the unrestrained gratification of the passions, terminate with his existence in this world; it will certainly be found, that all other considerations will very seldom be sufficient to preserve him in the practice of that morality, which is essential to our comfort and well being, even in this life.

It was a just observation of a French philosopher and revolutionist,* that "a people without morals may acquire liberty, but without morals they cannot preserve it." Had he, and those with whom he acted, gone a step further; and seen, that true religion is as necessary for the preservation of morality, as morality is for the security of liberty, they would not so completely have made shipwreck, not only of faith and a good conscience: but also of almost every obligation and every comfort, which contributes to the happiness of man in society. Let us, therefore, suffer the harms of others to make us careful, that our vessels may not be lost on the same quicksands. Religion affords the strongest motives for the practice of virtue. It sets before us the Omnipotence and the Omnipresence of the Divine Being; it tells us, that he rewards all those who diligently serve him, not only with peace in this world, but also with happiness hereafter; whilst those who neglect their duties to him and their fellow-creatures, will, unless they repent, be excluded from the Divine presence, and have their portion assigned them in a state of misery.

Thus much is inculcated by what is called the religion of nature. The belief of a Divine Being, and of a future state of

* Brissot;

rewards and punishments, though very imperfect and confused, was entertained by persons and nations, who never had the benefit of the Holy Scriptures ; and even by some nations in a state of great barbarism. The christian religion, whilst it gives additional force and illustration to these considerations, so as to bring " life and immortality to light," in a much more clear and conspicuous manner than it was before, gives also a more extensive knowledge of ourselves, and of the necessity of some strength superior to our own, to enable us to perfect holiness in the fear of God. It is by this religion that we become acquainted with the depravity of the human heart ; that we are taught the necessity of having it cleansed by the washing of regeneration and the renewings of the Holy Spirit ; that a measure of this Spirit, or, as it is elsewhere called, the grace of God, is given to mankind universally, in order, both to teach, and to enable them, " to deny ungodliness and the world's lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." The christian has also the encouraging consideration, that " if he sin, he hath an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous : " that he may rely on the merits and intercession of this gracious Redeemer and Mediator, for the forgiveness

of sins, when, with sincere repentance and amendment of life, he shall make application to Him, "who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Here, then, is the basis of morality. Here is that foundation to which our blessed Saviour alluded, when he said; "Who-soever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man, who built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock."

CHAPTER III.

*On the Love of God, our Neighbour, and
Ourselves, as the principle of Religious
and Moral Duties.*

MUCH has been written, at different times, on the theory of human obligations; but after all, I conceive we cannot resolve this theory or principle into a more simple, or a more comprehensive rule, than the love of God, the love of our neighbour, and the love of ourselves. The last is included in those two commandments, in which our Lord instructed a Jewish lawyer, when he inquired which was the great commandment in the law. The answer was, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it; thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." The love of ourselves is not here, or elsewhere, particularly inculcated. It is indeed a duty to which we are all so ready to attend, (though sometimes we mistake our own real interest,) that the inculcation of it is superfluous; and therefore, it being an acknowledged principle of

ON THE LOVE OF GOD, &c. 17

action, it is referred to, as that by which we ought to regulate our conduct one towards another... I do not, however, conceive that we are required by this precept, to love our neighbour in the same degree, but only in the same manner, as we love ourselves; and so as always to act towards him with justice and tenderness. This is consistent with another most excellent precept inculcated by our blessed Lord: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. For this (he also says) is the law and the prophets." This golden rule, as it has frequently been called, coincides with, and elucidates, the second commandment already mentioned. It confirms the observation, that it is the same kind, rather than the same degree of love, that we entertain for ourselves, which we are required to cherish towards our neighbour. It also shows that love and justice are duties which are nearly allied; and that they seem to flow one into another so imperceptibly, that the exact boundary of each cannot easily be ascertained... Love is a debt which we all owe one to another; and justice requires that our debts should be punctually paid.

The two commandments and the rule of conduct which have been recited, therefore, appear to form a complete theory of self-

12 ON THE LOVE OF GOD, &c.

gious and moral duties. The love of God; the love of our neighbour, from which perfect justice proceeds; and that which is necessarily implied in the second precept, the proper love of ourselves; are the principles on which mankind ought always to act. They are principles which may be applied to almost every transaction of our lives; and when they are thoroughly understood and acted upon, we shall feel the consolation arising from the consequence of a due attention to them, as described by our blessed Redeemer: "This do, and thou shalt live."

The excellence and importance of love is very instructingly described by the Apostle Paul, in the first Epistle to the Corinthians. It is by our translators rendered Charity, which appears to have formerly been a term synonymous with love, as the same Greek word is sometimes rendered by one, and sometimes by the other, when it is evident that the same thing is meant. In this place it seems to include love both to God and man; and is called, in reference to the different gifts which then existed in the church, "a more excellent way." And when we consider that those gifts were more numerous and more extraordinary at that time, than they appear to be now, the comparative excellence of this charity or love,

must be increased. The description of this virtue is so interesting and important, that it may be proper to give it at length :—
 “Though I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal ; and though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge ; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long and is kind ; charity envieth not ; charity vaunteth not itself ; is not puffed up ; doth not behave itself unseemly ; seeketh not her own ; is not easily provoked ; thinketh no evil ; rejoiceth not in iniquity ; but rejoiceth in the truth ; beareth all things ; believeth all things ; hopeth all things ; endureth all things. Charity never faileth ; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail ; whether there be tongues, they shall cease ; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away ; for we know in part, and we prophesy in part.—And now abideth faith, hope, and charity, these three : but the greatest of these is charity.”

CHAPTER IV.

On the Holy Scriptures, as containing the best Precepts for Religious and Moral Duties.

TO show the excellency of the Scriptures, it is not necessary to depreciate the moral writings of those who are called Heathens. That their Morality, as well as their Religion was very imperfect, and very inferior to that which is recommended in the Bible, it requires no partiality to the latter to evince. Yet we may see much in the writings of the Heathens that claims our assent, and even admiration: they strongly support the observation of the Apostle, that "when the Gentiles which had not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these—show the work of the law written in their hearts." But with a religion, in many of its parts grossly sensual, as well as erroneous in doctrine, their morality must have been very defective; and though we frequently find cause to admire its comparative excellence under all its disadvantages, yet we must, on an impartial consideration, be sensible of its great imperfection, and inferiority to the morality of the gospel. The Religion which the Scriptures recommend, is very different from that which was taught

ON THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, &c. 15
amongst the Heathens, and absolutely prohibits many of the enormities of the latter, by which the morals, even of its votaries, must have been greatly corrupted.

If we consider the contents of the Old Testament, we shall there find the portraiture of a Religion, which, though it was united with many ritual observances, inculcated, either directly by its precepts, or indirectly by its typical allusions, purity and integrity of heart and conduct. Even at the time that the legal dispensation was communicated, the religious and moral obligations contained in the Ten Commandments, were imposed; and although in the course of the following work, most of them will be separately mentioned, yet it may not be improper in this place to present them collectively before the reader.—They are thus briefly introduced: “And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage.” Then the Commandments are delivered in the following order.

I. “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

II. “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under

16 ON THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, &c.

the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the Fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

III. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

IV. "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work; thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, the Sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Seventh Day and hallowed it."

V. "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

VI. "Thou shalt not kill."

VII. "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

VIII. "Thou shalt not steal."

IX. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy Neighbour."

X. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man servant, nor his maid servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's."

Here we have a brief view of the excellent morality which was inculcated in the Old Testament; but which was not wholly confined to these particulars, as may be seen in the writings of the prophets, and others of the more antient inspired penmen: but when we come to the New Testament, we find our Saviour improving upon the precepts contained in the Old, and directly inculcating that purity of heart, humility of mind, holiness of life, benevolence and simplicity of manners, which, springing from the sincere love of God, may be considered as the leading features of the religion of Jesus Christ; and give to its Divine Author a superiority "above every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come."

The following description of the precepts and doctrines contained in the Scriptures, by a religious writer, about a century ago, may be properly introduced here, as a brief summary of the objects of these most im-

18 ON THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, &c.

portant writings :* “ Here all sorts of men and women, that are under no natural or moral incapacity, may read their duties to God and to one another, in their several stations and relations, wherein the Divine Providence hath placed them. For the Holy Scriptures testify, that we ought to love God above all, and our neighbours as ourselves. They shew us what we are to believe concerning God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit; how to order our thoughts, words, and actions; and so to live here, that we may be happy hereafter.

“ They testify that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God—that the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. [The Scriptures further testify] that Christ tasted death for every man; was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification, made higher than the Heavens; is

* Richard Claridge. He was one of the People called Quakers; and this quotation may rectify the mistakes of some persons, respecting the sentiments of this Society on the Scriptures.

set down at the right hand of God ; and ever liveth to make intercession for us—that he is the light of the world ; and he that followeth him, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life—that the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal. [They also testify,] that except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God—that Christ's disciples should be perfect, even as their Father which is in Heaven is perfect—that denying self, taking up the cross, and following him, are the proper characteristics of his disciples—that God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth—that Christ is the substance of all the types and figures under the Levitical Priesthood, being the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. We learn from the Holy Scriptures, that he is not only a sacrifice for sin, but a Saviour from sin, being himself without sin—that none can be saved by his merit who are not sanctified by his spirit—that the form of godliness will avail nothing without the power, and the name of christian will be ineffectual without the nature—that without the grace of Christ we can do nothing acceptable in the sight of God, and by the help and assistance of his grace, we may work out our own salvation with fear and

20 ON THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, &c.

trembling. These, and multitudes more of the like heavenly truths, are discoursed of in the Holy Scriptures, which tend to the glory of God and of his Son Christ Jesus; to the purifying, guiding, and perfecting of mankind; and to the fitting and preparing us for the kingdom of God; and therefore they call for our most diligent reading, fervent application, and most exact conformity of heart and life to the truths therein testified."

In these views of the Holy Scriptures, the professors of Christianity are generally united; and therefore I thought that the religious and moral precepts which I wished to inculcate, could not be drawn from a more universally approved, or from a purer source, than the sacred writings. I have for these reasons, and also to show their excellence, taken extracts from them, as affording the best rules for the different duties here inculcated. A scriptural view of these duties will, I conceive, place them in a clearer and stronger light, than any that can be taken from all the systems of ethics or metaphysics which exist in the world. However the Bible may be slighted by some persons, yet a fair view of the religious and moral instruction which it contains, compared with that which any other of the religious distinctions of

ON THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, &c. 21

mankind possess, will, it is presumed, decide the superiority clearly in favour of those Scriptures, which we are justly told, are "profitable for doctrine, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"

CHAPTER V.

On the Divine Attributes.

BEFORE we enter into a consideration of the duties which we owe to the Divine Being, it will be proper to take notice of the Attributes on which these duties are founded; and by which they become a reasonable service. The Attributes of God are largely set forth in the Holy Scriptures, from which we learn, that "He is the maker, preserver, and governor of all things; that he is a Being every way perfect; the only¹ God, who hath none other like him, and who is greater and more excellent than all other beings: that he is a Spirit, eternal and unchangeable, and fills all places by his presence; that his happiness, knowledge, wisdom, and power are infinite; that he is perfectly good and gracious; righteous and just; true and faithful; pure and holy; and that after all we know of him, he is incomprehensible."²

In order to show how far this definition is supported by the Holy Scriptures, it will be necessary to give some quotations from these writings, descriptive of the various Attributes of God, as above recited. The

*-Castrell's Christian Institutes.

Following are of this nature; "By him were all things created that are in Heaven, and that are in earth. He is before all things, and by him all things consist. He preserveth and upholdeth all things by his power. In him we live, and move, and have our being. The world is his, and the fulness thereof. The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. He is governor among the nations; the whole earth is full of his glory."

"As for God, his way is perfect: He is a rock; his work is perfect. Thine, O Lord! is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty. Thou art very great: thou art clothed with honour and majesty. The Lord our God is one Lord: he is God in the Heaven above and in the earth beneath; there is none else. Who is like unto thee, O Lord? who is like thee; glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? The Lord is great above all Gods; far above all principalities, and powers, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."

"God is a spirit; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; with whom is no varia-

24 ON THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

bleness, neither shadow of turning. He filleth all in all. Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? Do not I fill Heaven and earth, saith the Lord? In his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore."

"The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. He is mighty in wisdom; he is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working; the only wise God; Almighty, and can do every thing; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

"The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. God is love; the God of peace; the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. The Lord is righteous, a just God; he loveth righteousness; he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice; he will not condemn the innocent, nor will he let the guilty go free. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? He is the God of truth; his counsels of old are faithfulness and truth; for all his promises are yea and Amen for ever."

"The Lord our God is holy; yea, he is glorious in holiness. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty; who art, and wast, and art to come. Oh! the depth of the riches, both

ON THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES. 25

of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For of him, and through him, and to him are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

PART II.

RELIGIOUS DUTIES.

CHAPTER I.

On Faith and Hope in God.

THE first Duty which we owe to the Divine Being, is Faith; or a belief in the existence of God, in his power, and in his goodness. It is called Faith, because these great and important truths do not admit of that kind of demonstration by which many other truths may be proved: and yet all around us, and all within us, so fully evince the existence, the power, and the goodness, of a Divine Being, that this Faith may be considered a just and reasonable duty. On a subject so much above our comprehension we must be content, in some degree, to walk "by faith, and not by sight." We need not therefore stumble at this first principle of religion, to which our implicit acquiescence is required. "Without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh unto him, must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of all those that diligently seek him." When these principles have their proper

ON FAITH AND HOPE IN GOD. 27

Influence on the heart, they are of great service to us in our passage through life; and tend greatly to reconcile our minds to those various circumstances, which are, by an allwise Providence, permitted or dispensed to us. It is by the eye of faith that we see Him, who is, to every other eye, invisible; and by this eye of faith we are enabled to look beyond the things which are seen, and are temporal, to those things which are not seen, and are eternal. It was under the influence of this faith, that "Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin; seeing him who is invisible, and having an eye to the recompense of reward."

From Faith in the Divine Being and Providence, proceeds that "Hope which is as an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast." In the storms and tempests attendant on this probationary state of existence, a humble hope and trust in the mercies and providence of God, are essentially necessary to the preservation of the vessel, from being driven on the rocks or quicksands which surround our coast; and on which shipwreck is sometimes made of every thing that renders life valuable, or eternity desirable.

This hope or trust may be divided into two parts; first, as it relates to the Provi-

28 ON FAITH AND HOPE IN GOD.

dence of God, in reference to the things of this life ; and secondly, as it relates to his mercy in respect to those things which pertain to that life which is to come. With respect to the first, our blessed Lord strengthens his disciples in their confidence in the Divine Providence, by many apt allusions and pressing exhortations : " I say unto you, take no thought (or rather, be not anxious) for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.—Behold the fowls of the air ; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly father feedeth them.—Consider the lilies how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin ; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith ? Therefore seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you."

We have in the prophet Habakkuk an eminent instance of resignation to Divine protection, and of confidence therein. After foreseeing some impending calamities, he expresses himself in this animated and animating language : " Although the fig tree

ON FAITH AND HOPE IN GOD. 29

shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine ; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls ; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

It sometimes happens that religiously disposed minds fall into a state of depression and discouragement, respecting their inward or their future state. This, so far as it excites vigilance and exertion, may be beneficial ; but when its tendency is to lead to despair of the mercies of God, and to cast away our confidence in his goodness and loving kindness, it becomes a disposition to which we ought not to give way, but should carefully guard against its attacks. This situation of mind is strongly described by the Psalmist, in the seventy-seventh Psalm ; " In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord ; my * hand was stretched out in the night and ceased not : my soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God, and was troubled, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Will the Lord cast off for ever ? will he be favourable no more ? is his mercy clean gone for ever ? doth his promise fail for evermore ? hath God forgotten to be gracious ? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies ?" Here the Psalmist seems to re-

* See the marginal reading.

30 ON FAITH AND HOPE IN GOD.

collect his own peculiar weakness, and turn his reflections another way. "I said, this is my infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy works, and talk of thy doings. Thy way, O God! is in the sanctuary; who is so great a God as our God?" In another Psalm, we find the pious David consoling himself in this encouraging soliloquy; "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." Here we see the benefit of attending to that Apostolic exhortation; "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward."

The following passages point out the necessity and advantages of a proper trust or confidence in God, on all occasions: "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not unto thy own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established. Commit thy way unto him; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. Judgment is before him, therefore trust thou in him."

CHAPTER II.

On the Love of God.

WHEN we consider the Attributes which are ascribed to the Divine Being, and the relation in which we stand to him, nothing can be more reasonable, nothing more becoming that relation, than the tribute of Love: it is a disposition of mind which we ought peculiarly to cultivate, as being, in an especial manner, connected both with our duty and happiness. When this feeling predominates in the mind, those religious restraints, which are aptly described by "the yoke of Christ," become easy, and his burden is made light. The ways of righteousness come to be "ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace."

Having, in the preliminary considerations, treated on the subject of love, both as it relates to God and man, it will not be necessary now to enlarge much upon it. This duty is, however, in itself, so important, and the Scriptures afford so many exhortations and inducements to it, that it cannot be passed over here; nor should the cautions against those things which lessen the sense of it upon our minds, be overlooked.

When our Saviour was insidiously asked; "Which is the great commandment of the

law?" the reply was, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment." Did we place this duty sufficiently before us, as the most desirable object of our attainment, and frequently examine ourselves respecting it; considering at the same time the many reasonable motives which we have for fulfilling it; we should be likely to witness an increase of this love in our hearts, and feelingly to unite with the expressions of Holy writ: "I love thy commandments above gold, yea above fine gold. Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it. Oh! love the Lord, all ye saints; for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. Let them that love thy name be joyful in thee; for thou, Lord! wilt bless the righteous. Let such as love thy salvation say continually, the Lord be magnified. The Lord preserveth all them that love him."

But of all the inducements to the love of God, there is none so powerful as that which the Apostle mentions: "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." In the enjoyment of this consoling faith, christians can say, "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy

"Ghost which is given unto us." Such was the prevalence and the establishment of this love in the heart of the Apostle, and some of his fellow believers, that he could confidently declare : " I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come ; nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The principal proof of our love arises from our obedience to what we know to be the Divine will concerning us, or his commandments to us. " If ye love me (says our Saviour) keep my commandments." — Consistent with this language, is that of the Apostle John ; " This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments ; and his commandments are not grievous."

In order to guard us against the loss of that love, which is so important a part of our duty, the following advices and cautions are given : " Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth ; love not the world, neither the things which are in the world : If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him : for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, are not of the Father, but of the world."

The world passeth away and the lust thereof: whosoever will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God; for the friendship of the world is enmity with God." Let not these interesting cautions and observations be forgotten; and then the following salutations of the Apostle may be verified in our experience: "The Lord direct your hearts unto the love of God, and unto the patient waiting for Christ—Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

CHAPTER III.

On the Fear of God.

THE next Duty which we owe to the Divine Being, and which may probably be considered by many as previous to that of Love, is the Fear of offending him. This has been in all ages the disposition of the righteous, by which they have been, in a great measure, preserved from falling into those irreligious and immoral practices, which draw down Divine displeasure on men. When we consider the Omnipotence, the Omniscience, and the Justice of God, we shall find abundant cause for cherishing this Fear, accompanied with an awful reverence of Spirit towards him. So forcibly was this duty impressed on the mind of one of the Patriarchs, that the Divine Being was styled "The Fear of Isaac." Joseph was an eminent example of the beneficial effects of this Fear. He says of himself, "I fear God;" and he gave a striking proof of it, when, under a peculiar temptation, he resisted it with this memorable language: "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

When we attend to all the beneficial consequences which are described in Scripture,

as the result of this virtue, its importance must forcibly impress our minds, and should stimulate us to the attainment of it. "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God," was a precept early given to the Jewish nation, and was added to many of their legal institutions, as an incentive to duty. In the Book of Job, we have a grand description of the inestimable value of true wisdom; which is, after all that is said of it, reduced to this simple, but important point; "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." Solomon concludes his no less fine description of wisdom in similar words: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding." In this description of wisdom, he also says; "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate." Again, "By the fear of the Lord, men depart from evil. It is a fountain of life, preserving from the snares of death. By humility and the fear of the Lord, are riches, and honour, and life."

The Psalmist inculcates the Divine fear, in this inviting language: "Come, ye children, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord. What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see

good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth." We have many other incitements to this duty in the Scriptures; particularly in the Psalms. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. He is to be feared above all gods. Thou, even thou, O God of Jacob! art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight, when once thou art angry? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared. Stand in awe, and sin not. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Let all the earth fear the Lord. Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. The Lord reigneth, let the people tremble. He sitteth between the Cherubim, let the earth be moved. Who would not fear thee, O King of nations! for to thee doth it appertain?"

But in the Holy Scriptures, Christians are taught whom they should not fear, as well as whom they should fear: "Ye shall not fear other gods. Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs

of Heaven ; for the customs of the people are vain. The fear of man bringeth a snare. Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. I, even I, am he that comforteth you : Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of a man which shall be made as grass ; and forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the Heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth ?”

Our blessed Redeemer gave his disciples some particular instructions on this subject : “ I say unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear. Fear him, who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into Hell ; yea, I say unto you, fear Him.”

Thus we find, in every dispensation, the fear of God was a necessary attainment. It formed a prominent part in that message delivered by the Angel, who was seen to “ fly in the midst of Heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth ; saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgments is come ; and worship him that made Heaven and Earth ; and the Sea, and the Fountains of Waters.”

CHAPTER IV.

On Religious Meditation.

BY Religious Meditation, is meant, that inward retirement of mind from the cares and concerns of this world, in which we may contemplate the works of God, both in creation and redemption; and consider the duties which we owe to him, and one to another.

To have the mind frequently engaged in this manner, is of no small importance to the religious improvement of a christian. For this purpose, at well as for that of inward retirement and private prayer, some persons set apart particular times of the day: whilst others find it practicable, when they are engaged in their outward employments, inwardly to retire from the world's concerns, secretly to meditate upon the law of the Lord, to wait upon him for the renewal of their spiritual strength, and to pour out their supplications unto him. To prescribe the mode of performing these duties, is not my business; and indeed it is a point in which we cannot well prescribe one for another. That they are duties, important and beneficial, will, no doubt, be generally admitted: and we have reason to believe, that they have been practised by

40 ON RELIGIOUS MEDITATION.

the righteous of all generations. We are told that Enoch walked with God; and we may reasonably suppose, that this was by secret communion with him, and meditation upon his works and commands:

Of religious meditation, we have an example in the case of Isaac; and from the incidental mention of his "going into the field at eventide to meditate," a presumptive proof, at least, is afforded, that a similar practice was not uncommon with the Patriarchs. To Joshua, the successful leader of the children of Israel into the promised land, this command was given: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayst observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." We have but little left on record in the Scriptures, of the private, religious exercises of those concerning whom they are written, previously to the Book of Psalms. Here we find in the first Psalm, religious meditation represented as a material part of the employment of the man who is styled blessed. "His delight, says the Psalmist, is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night." It was, no doubt, to this duty that the

ON RELIGIOUS MEDITATION. 47

Psalmist alluded, when he gave this exhortation; "Commune with your own heart upon your bed; and be still." The benefits which result from religious meditation are thus described; "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches." Again we find this employment excellently and profitably illustrated, and its benefits under close conflicts strongly described. "I have considered the days of old; the years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my song in the night, and my spirit made diligent search. Will the Lord cast off for ever; and will he be favourable no more?" After various considerations of this kind, the Psalmist concludes in this manner: "Surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings. Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: Who is so great a God as our God?"

But the inspired writers did not confine their meditation to the law of their God, or to his providential dealings with his people. They saw him, and they adored him, in the works of creation. From these they drew many beautiful similes, and inculcated much important and humbling instruction.

“The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.” Again, “When I consider thy Heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; [I exclaim] What is man that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man that thou visitest him?”

Our duties also afford very copious subjects for our meditation: Thus the Apostle Paul enumerates many particulars of a very comprehensive nature, and recommends them to the contemplation of his favourite Philippians: “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on those things.” To this exhortation he adds these memorable words: “Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of Peace shall be with you.”

CHAPTER V.

Watchfulness and waiting upon God.

THESE Duties are intimately connected with each other. Watchfulness is an exercise of the mind, in which we are concerned to guard against the approach and attack of evil on the one hand ; and on the other to be looking for, and ready to receive the communication of Divine good to the soul. The last may be termed waiting upon God. This expression may also be applied to a dependence on the Divine care and bounty, for the supply of our spiritual and temporal wants ; and patiently waiting the Lord's time for this supply.

When we consider how we are surrounded in this world by temptations to evil ; how much our own propensities incline us to comply with it ; and that in addition to these inducements, there is also an unwearied enemy and evil spirit, who is seeking our destruction ; watchfulness will appear to be an indispensable duty. The world, the flesh, and the devil, are all represented in Holy writ, as enemies, against which it is necessary to be upon our guard. "The world lieth in wickedness, and its friendship is enmity with God. The flesh lusteth

against the spirit ;" and so powerful is that enemy, who has these weapons to war with against our happiness, that an Apostle formerly gave this important exhortation to the early believers : " Be sober, be vigilant, for your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour." When these considerations have taken place in our minds, we shall be convinced of the propriety of that universal command, given by our blessed Saviour ; " What I say unto you, I say unto all ; watch." Again, " Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Thus also the Apostles, " Watch ye, stand fast in the faith ; quit you like men, be strong. Let us watch, and be sober. Be ye sober and watch unto prayer."

The truly humble minded christian is frequently brought to feel his own incapacity for every good word and work. He is often made sensible of that important truth, inculcated by his Divine master ; " No man can come unto me, except the Father, which sent me, draw him." From this sense and feeling, he finds the necessity of patiently waiting upon God, for help and strength in the performance of his religious duties. The benefit of this state of mind is frequently described in Holy Writ, and its duty strongly enforced ; " Wait on the

Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart; wait, I say, on the Lord." Again, "I waited patiently on the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay; and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings; and he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. Many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." Thus does the royal Psalmist describe the beneficial consequences of waiting upon God; and Solomon represents wisdom, no doubt the "wisdom which is from above," speaking in this manner: "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors."

The prophet Habakkuk appears to have been sensible of the importance of this duty, both for his own particular benefit, and for the fulfilment of his prophetic office: "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved." In this state of mind he received the divine communication and commission, to "write the vision and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth-it." Thus also we find the Apostles were commanded by their heavenly

master, previously to their entering on their Apostolical office, "to wait at Jerusalem for the promise of the father; which, saith he, ye have heard of me."

I shall conclude this subject with the lively description, given by the evangelicall prophet, of the benefits arising from this exercise of mind: "Even the youths shall faint and grow weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint."

CHAPTER VI.

On Prayer.

OF all the Duties which Religion requires, there is not one more clearly obligatory, or more interestingly important, than that of Prayer; by which it is scarcely necessary to say, is meant, the making our requests known to God, for those things of which we stand in need, whether temporal or spiritual. This is a duty which we may be said to owe to ourselves, as well as to God. When we consider our manifold wants, our infirmities, and our dangers, with our incapacity to supply or relieve ourselves: and when we reflect, that the Divine Being alone is capable of affording us that supply and assistance, which are necessary for our present and future well-being; the importance of this duty to ourselves, or for our own benefit, must be obvious. Again, when we consider, that God is the giver of every good and perfect gift; that the earth is his, and the fulness thereof; that in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; these considerations show, that prayer is a duty which we owe to his Omnipotence and Goodness; but in addition to these reasonable considerations, the commands which are given us in the Holy Scriptures, impose

prayer upon us, as being indispensably due to the Almighty.

We have various precepts and examples, respecting this duty, in the Old Testament, all tending to incite us to "lift up our hearts with our hands to God in the Heavens:" but in the New Testament the directions are most full and particular. Our blessed Lord inculcated this duty very forcibly among his disciples; and we are told, that "he spake a parable to them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." The Apostle Paul is very earnest in his injunctions on this head: "Be careful (or anxious) for nothing; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving. Pray without ceasing. I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting: that supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks, be made for all men: for Kings and for those that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Saviour."

But there are some circumstances necessary to be attended to, in order to make

our prayers acceptable, and such as will be likely to procure a favourable answer to them. The first of these is, sincerity of heart, in the abhorrence of sin, and in desires after holiness and purity. Of this the Psalmist appears to have been fully sensible, when he says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Again, "I will wash my hands in innocency, so will I encompass thy altar, O God!" Solomon also makes a memorable observation on this subject: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law; even his prayer shall be an abomination to the Lord. In another place he says, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight." In the answer which the young man, who had been blind, made to the cavilling Jews, we have an instructive remark on the qualification for true prayer; "We know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth." The Apostle John also inculcates a similar doctrine: "Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God; and whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."

The direction and caution which were given by our Saviour on this subject, should also be remembered, in order to avoid that ostentatious disposition which mars, in the sight of God, all our otherwise good words and works: "When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father, who is in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

Our Lord having thus cautioned his disciples against a desire to be seen and praised of men, proceeds to correct another false apprehension, which some had entertained, that they should be heard for their much speaking. Of this notion he exposes the folly; and in order to exemplify the doctrine which he taught, he gives his disciples a most comprehensive, and at the same time concise specimen of prayer: "Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

On one part of this excellent prayer, our blessed Lord makes a short comment, to show the importance of a disposition of mind, which, through Divine grace, it is in our power, and is certainly our duty, to attain: "If ye forgive men their trespasses, Your heavenly father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses; neither will your father forgive your trespasses." Of how great importance is this duty of forgiveness! and, may it not be added, how little is it attended to!

Our approaches to the Throne of Divine grace, ought also to be accompanied with a trust in the mediation and intercession of Jesus Christ; to which he himself holds out this, and other encouraging promises; "Verily, verily, I say unto you; whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." We are also directed to "ask in faith, nothing wavering."

There is another important requisite necessary to be attended to, in the performance of the solemn duty of prayer. This is, the assistance of the Holy Spirit; the necessity of which the Apostle Paul clearly sets forth, when he says, "The spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for, as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered."

and he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is in the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." The same Apostle in another place describes true prayer in this manner; Praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit; and watching thereunto with all perseverance."

Great is the importance of a due attention to the duty on which we are now treating, and to the various circumstances necessary for its acceptable performance. Of this the Psalmist appears to have been deeply sensible, when he preferred this petition to the Divine Being; "Let my prayer come up before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice." For want of a due attention to those circumstances, there is reason to fear, that many, at this time, may be subject to the same remark, which the Apostle James makes concerning some in his day: "Ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not; ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss; that ye may consume it upon your lusts." On the other hand, we are told by the same Apostle, that "the fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." This, we have good reason to believe, is the Prayer which ascends like incense, before the Throne of God, and of the Lamb.

CHAPTER VII.

On Thanksgiving and Praise.

THANKSGIVING is an expression of our gratitude to the Divine Being, for favours received. Praise may convey a sense of admiration, as well as of gratitude; and is applicable to the power and wisdom, as well as to the goodness of God. Thus the psalmist: "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

The reasonableness of these duties, and the obligations to perform them, are so self-evident to every considerate mind, that believes in a Divine Being and Providence, that, if we had no injunctions to the practice of them, they would unavoidably become an almost involuntary effusion from every feeling heart. But it is to be regretted that, either from want of consideration, or from want of sensibility, there are among those, who are surrounded with blessings on every hand, many who are inattentive to the favours which they enjoy, or ungrateful for them. Ingratitude to the Divine Being for temporal or spiritual blessings, is a sin which is peculiarly marked by his displeasure. Of this we have a strong proof in the instance

of the Israelites, of whom, after recapitulating the peculiar favours by which they had been distinguished, it is said ; “ But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked—then he forsook God who made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation. They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, they sacrificed unto devils, and not to God.—And when the Lord saw it, he abhorred them; because of the provoking of his sons and of his daughters.”

Here we see the idolatry of the Jews described, as the consequence of their ingratitude for the blessings which were conferred upon them; and the Apostle, in describing the depraved state of the heathen world, both in its religion and morality, traces it to the same source : “ Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful : but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened ; professing to be wise they became fools ; and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man ; and to birds, and to four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves ; who changed the truth of God into a lie ; and worshipped

ON THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE. 55

and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."

When we consider these lamentable consequences, as the result of unthankfulness and ingratitude, how important is the exhortation of the prophet Jeremiah: "Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains; and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness."

Numerous are the examples, as well as the exhortations, which are contained in the Holy Scriptures, and particularly in the book of Psalms, relating to this subject; from which it may be sufficient to extract the following: "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High! to show forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night. Let the people praise thee, O God! let all the people praise thee. Bless the Lord, O my soul! and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul! and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thy iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction: who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies. Oh! that men would praise the Lord for his good-

ness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men."

The inspired writers of the New Testament likewise furnish us with many incitements to this duty. Christianity itself was introduced with, "Glory to God in the highest," as an acknowledgment previously necessary to the promotion of "Peace on earth, and good will towards men." We find the mother of our Lord pouring out her soul in a grateful song of praise, which begins with this pious language: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour—for he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name." The Apostle Paul very pressingly inculcates an attention to these duties. "In every thing," says he, "give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be ye filled with the Spirit: speaking to yourselves in psalms, and in hymns, and in spiritual songs; singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always, for all things, unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name."

ON THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE. 57

It is not, however a formal performance of this duty that will meet with divine approbation. It must, like prayer, be the produce of a humbled and sanctified heart. When this is attained to, thankfulness and praise will frequently become involuntary effusions, and ascend with acceptance before Him, who is the giver of every good and perfect gift; and, as this state of mind is continued in, qualification will finally be experienced to join with that innumerable multitude, mentioned in the Book of Revelations, who "stood before the Throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, saying, Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb:" to which sacred anthem, the whole Angelic host returned this responsive language: "Amen. Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever. Amen."

CHAPTER VIII.

On Public Worship, and the Appropriation of One Day in the Week for this Pur- pose.

THE Public Worship of the Almighty is a special duty of all men, who have opportunity and ability for it. This results from the relation in which we all stand to God, as our Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor. Common benefits demand united thanksgiving and praises. A social acknowledgment of these mercies and blessings, not only becomes us as dependent Beings, but is attended with various advantages. The rich and prosperous, when thus assembled with the poor and afflicted, and acknowledging their dependence on the same great Benefactor, may learn humility, and be led to sentiments of charity towards their fellow-creatures. The children of poverty, and distress, whilst assembled with the opulent, and joining them in solemn worship, may feel that they are all the offspring of one gracious parent; all equally dependent on his bounty and goodness; and from those feelings, they may learn to support, with resignation and hope, that allotment which the Father of Mercies has assigned to them.

'In the one class, sentiments of pride and contempt for others, are likely to be suppressed; and in the other, envy, discontent, and murmuring are discouraged. Whatever differences may elsewhere exist among men, in the presence of the Divine Being, "the rich and the poor meet [equally] together: for the Lord is [equally] the maker of them all."

The Holy Scriptures inform us, that this duty had been practised in all ages, by those who had been distinguished for piety and virtue. In early times, the sacrifices of animals, or offerings of the fruits of the earth, were the most common mode of publicly acknowledging a dependence on the Divine Being, and were most probably of Divine institution; but when it pleased the Almighty to separate from the rest of mankind a people, whom he distinguished by peculiar precepts and favours, it appears that, in addition to those offerings, they met together for the performance of Divine Worship: "Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary; I am the Lord." This precept points out the institution of a time and place for public worship; and they were both religiously observed by the pious among the Jews; though there is reason to believe they were much neglected by many of another description.

The Psalmist, with that humble piety which peculiarly distinguishes his character, is an eminent instance of public, as well as private devotion: "As for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy, and in thy fear will I worship towards thy holy temple." Again, "We will go into his tabernacle; we will worship at his footstool." And in order that he may perform this service acceptably, he forms an excellent resolution; "I will wash my hands in innocency: so will I compass thy altar. O Lord! That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works." Nor was it merely as an obligation, that he performed this important duty; "His delight was in the law of the Lord; and this made the performance of religious worship a grateful, not an irksome task. "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thy honour dwelleth. How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of God,—for a day in thy courts is better than a thousand [elsewhere] I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness."

Although the Christian dispensation exempted its professors from the ceremonious part of the Jewish law, it did not, by any

means, exempt them from the duty of public worship. We have the examples of our Saviour and his Apostles, in support of this practice. The Apostle Paul is indeed very strenuous in inculcating it: "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service:" and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, public worship is thus excellently illustrated and enforced: "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus; by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; and having an High-Priest over the House of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith;—not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

The Christian religion has, however, freed its professors from being confined to particular places, for the performance of religious worship. Thus our Saviour taught his disciples: "Where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them:" and in the memorable conversation, which he held with the Samaritan woman, he shewed that public worship was

ON PUBLIC WORSHIP, &c.

not be confined to any particular place; for when she inquired of him, whether Jerusalem, or the mountain of Samaria, was the true place of worship, he set them, and by consequence, all other particular places, aside, as being exclusively appropriated to this purpose. "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, [exclusively] worship the Father.—But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." Here we see the fulfilling of the evangelical prophecy; "In every place, incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering."

Though no place is exclusively essential to the performance of public worship; yet some place is necessary for "the assembling of ourselves together;" and some time must be peculiarly appropriated to this purpose. Under the Jewish law, and most probably prior to that time, the seventh day of the week was set apart for this service: but when that dispensation was abrogated, the primitive christians thought proper to alter the time, from the seventh to the first day of the week. Although the ceremonial

part of the Jewish sabbath, is not obligatory upon Christians; yet several of the reasons assigned for its institution, apply to us equally with them. Christians in all ages have, therefore, agreed in the appropriation of a seventh day, or one day in the week, to be particularly set apart for public worship, and for other means of religious improvement; as also for a time of relaxation and rest from bodily labour, to those who are subject to it. This indulgence was extended under the law, to the animal creation, as well as to those persons who were in a state of servitude and bondage: "That thine ox and thine ass may rest; and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger may be refreshed."

The religious observance of one day in the week, is of so much importance to the preservation of piety and virtue; and the neglect of it is so evidently marked with irreligion, and, in general, with immorality, that, however necessary it is to avoid the superstitious observance of it, which our Saviour had occasion to censure, in the time of his personal appearance on earth; yet every reasonable consideration conspires to press the practice closely upon us, as affording an opportunity, which many could not otherwise easily obtain, of acquiring religious instruction and improvement; and of pub-

64 ON PUBLIC WORSHIP, &c.

licly performing that worship, which is due unto "Him that made Heaven and Earth, the Seas, and the Fountains of Waters."

The pious christian does not, however, confine his public devotions to one day in the week. Sensible of the obligation, and feeling the benefit of a more frequent performance of this religious service, he embraces opportunities, when afforded to him, of attending on public worship, on some other day, or days, than that which is specially set apart for this purpose: and although this may, in some instances, require him to leave his temporal concerns; and may seem to be attended with some worldly disadvantages; yet the views which he entertains of religious obligations, induce him to follow the example of the good King David, when, on a certain occasion, he made use of this disinterested language: "Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God, of that which doth cost me nothing."

CHAPTER IX.

On Obedience and Patience

AFTER treating on the preceding particular duties, it may be proper to take notice of the general duty of Obedience; and to connect with it that of Patience. By Obedience is meant the practical and active part of those duties, which we know to be the Divine will concerning us.

When the mind is impressed with the belief of the power and goodness of God, and brought under the influence of that love and fear which we owe to him, Obedience to the manifestations of his will, becomes the necessary result of this impression and influence. But as the operation of these principles is generally slow and gradual, and the Christian traveller has many temptations and difficulties to encounter, before he has reason to believe that "in him verily is the love of God perfected;" it is of importance to know, that simple Obedience to the Divine will is an indispensable obligation: "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams: for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry."

• 66 ON OBEDIENCE AND PATIENCE.

Fear and love are, however, motives which are essential to true obedience. We find them in the Holy Scriptures used to excite the minds of the people to the service of God, and to an attention to his commands, "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and keep his charge and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments always. Ye shall observe to do as the Lord your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand, or to the left, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel:—obey my voice; and walk ye in all my ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you."

In the New Testament, the importance of Obedience to the Divine will and commands, is very strongly enforced. Our blessed Redeemer manifested how little he sought the praise of men, and how much he desired the glory of his Father, and the real good of mankind, when he gave this salutary caution to his hearers: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord! Lord! shall enter the kingdom; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in Heaven." Again he saith: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." And it

was the observation of his beloved disciple,
 “He that doeth the will of God abideth for
 ever.”

Besides the particular instructions given by the Apostles of Christ, the general duty of Obedience, or keeping the divine commands, is thus enforced: “Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous. Hereby we do know Him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar; and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him, verily, is the love of God perfected.” When we consider these various testimonies to the importance of the practical part of religion; in which is necessarily involved a belief of its doctrines, because these are likewise Divine commands; we shall see the propriety of that conclusion, to which Solomon, after all his researches, was brought: “Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”

Intimately connected with Obedience, is the duty of Patience; by which is understood the bearing with fortitude of mind,

68 ON OBEDIENCE AND PATIENCE.

and resignation to the Divine will, whatever is permitted to befall us in this probationary state of existence. Obedience and Patience, or to do and suffer the whole will of God, may be said to comprehend the whole of those duties which religion and virtue require. Patience therefore holds an important place among the duties of a Christian. His life is aptly compared to a state of warfare, in which he has not only much to do, but much to bear. He must, in common with other men, submit to many privations and trials ; and sometimes his religion will subject him to more ; for which, however, it affords an ample compensation. But as this compensation is not always immediate, we are called upon by our faith, our hope, and our love to the Supreme Being, without whose providential attention we are told, not a hair of our heads falleth to the ground, to bear, with holy resignation, whatever he permits to befall us ; and, in conformity to those excellent examples which are transmitted to us in Holy writ, to say, when sufferings and trials are our lot : " The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord. Not my will but thine be done. The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ? "

When our Lord was apprizing his disciples of the afflictions which would befall them, he gave them this seasonable exhortation : " In your patience possess ye your souls ;" and it seems that this exhortation was not in vain ; for we afterwards find, when their Lord's predictions were verified, they had so attended to his instruction as to be able to say : " We glory in tribulations ; knowing that tribulation worketh patience ; and patience, experience ; and experience, hope ; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us. For which cause we faint not ; for though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day : for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; for the things which are seen, are temporal ; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, gives the following instructive exhortations on this subject : " My son despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him ; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,

70 ON OBEDIENCE AND PATIENCE.

and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. We have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live? For they, verily, for a few days chastened us, for their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening, for the present, seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness, unto them who are exercised thereby."

The Apostle James, among other exhortations to the duty of Patience, gives the following: "Take, my brethren, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction and patience. Behold! we count them happy who endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that he is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

As affliction is more or less the lot of humanity, it is of the utmost importance that we endeavour to have our minds fortified by patience, which may be called the strong-hold of religion and virtue. To this end, it may be beneficial to us to consider, how much we enjoy, or may enjoy; and of how little we are worthy. Humility is the

ON OBEDIENCE AND PATIENCE. 71

ground-work of patience. It gives light to the mind, and strength to the heart. "But if thou faint (says Solomon) in the day of adversity, thy strength is small." The humble, resigned mind knows, that all things shall work together for good; and in times of affliction is enabled to say with the prophet: "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my Salvation."

CHAPTER X.

On Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

WHEN we consider the number and extent of our duties to God, on the one hand; and the depravity and frailty of human nature, on the other; we must suppose that the neglect or violation of these duties will, at times, take place, even with those who may make the most early and regular advances in the way of holiness: but with respect to the generality of mankind, this neglect and violation are so prevalent and self-evident, that any attempt to demonstrate them would be superfluous. If therefore, it is, as it ought to be, a matter of concern to us, to live and die in the Divine favour, Repentance, united with amendment of life, becomes a most important duty.

The very first sermons which were preached both by our Saviour, and his forerunner, the Baptist, were on the subject of Repentance; and, in a few energetic expressions they enforced this first principle of the doctrine of Christ: "Repent for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Bring forth fruits meet for repentance." With these

precepts was laid, as it were, the foundation of that religion with which the world has been blessed through Jesus Christ. Repentance was, no doubt, always a necessary duty, since the transgression of our first parents: but the gospel dispensation being more particularly applied to the depraved state of human nature, this first work of true religion is primarily inculcated. We also find, that when the disciples went forth to preach and to teach, this appears to have been the first and principal part of their mission; for we are told by one of the Evangelists, that "they went out and preached, that men should repent." After the ascension of our Lord, and the pouring forth of the Spirit on the Apostles and Disciples, we find the doctrine of Repentance was preached in this powerful language: "Repent ye, and be converted; that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, who before, was preached unto you."

In that excellent relation of his gospel labours, which the Apostle Paul gave to the elders of Ephesus, we may perceive that repentance formed a very prominent part in the doctrines which he taught: "testifying (says he) both to the Jews, and also to the

Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

The connection of Repentance with Faith in Christ, forms a peculiar excellence of the gospel dispensation, and to which it is of the utmost importance to attend. How consoling is this consideration! "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." Numerous are the testimonies in holy writ to this gracious design of our merciful Redeemer. The evangelical prophet strongly and clearly speaks of it: "He was wounded for our transgressions; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes are we healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." This passage was opened to the Ethiopian Eunuch, and applied to Christ, by Philip the Evangelist.

The doctrine of Faith in Christ, as the means of reconciliation with God, is forcibly inculcated in the writings of the Apostles. To repeat all that they say on this subject, would be to transcribe a large portion of their Epistles. We are told by our Saviour himself, when some inquired of him, "What

shall we do, that we may work the works of God? "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him, whom God hath sent." The importance of this belief, or faith, is thus inculcated by the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans: "Now the righteousness of God, without the law, is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe, (for there is no difference; for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God,) being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth, to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."

The Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, largely exemplifies the doctrine of christian redemption. The eighth, ninth, and tenth chapters are particularly forcible and interesting, in the manner in which this subject is treated; and it will be proper to recite, in this place, some of the pertinent exhortations and observations with which he closes the subject: "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us

through the vail, that is to say, his flesh and having a High-Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith. He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and done despite to the Spirit of grace? For we know him who hath said; Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, said the Lord: and again, the Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Seeing then, that our duty and interest are both intimately connected with our possessing Faith in Christ; let us embrace it with full purpose of heart, and "hold fast the profession of it without wavering." Yet let us not forget, that "faith without works is dead, being alone;" and that we ought, therefore, to "add to our faith, virtue;" and to hold it in conjunction with "a good conscience:" thus may we entertain a well-grounded hope, that, when this probationary state shall terminate, we shall "receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls."

PART III.

MORAL DUTIES.

CLASS I. GENERAL DUTIES.

CLASS II. PARTICULAR DUTIES.

GENERAL DUTIES.

CHAPTER I.

Justice.

JUSTICE is a duty of great importance and extent : it consists in giving to all persons their respective rights ; and in exercising that veracity and uprightness in all our actions and words, which inspire mutual confidence. This may be considered as a fundamental virtue ; for without it social life loses its connections and its comforts ; and indeed can scarcely be said to exist. Without Justice all the other virtues, and particularly those of the benevolent kind, are little, if at all, better than hypocrisy. It is a virtue which even the Heathens

strongly inculcated; and in a manner which certainly does them credit;* In the Holy Scriptures, this virtue possesses a very important place; and is recommended in a strong and prominent manner. In the sixth chapter of Micah, Justice stands first in that brief, but comprehensive summary of duties, with which the Prophet's inquiries are answered: "He hath showed thee, O man! what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." Our blessed Lord, in a few words, at once lays down the rule for this duty, and recommends the practice of it. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets."

In treating on this subject, it may be proper to divide it into three heads; viz. Honesty, Veracity, and Sincerity.†

Honesty is intended to apply to our conduct, in those transactions which relate to property; which, in civilized life, and particularly in commercial nations, is a very important duty. Nor is it only a duty; our

* See in particular Tully's Offices.

† For that part of Justice which relates to the duties of Magistrates, see the chapter on Magistrates and Subjects.

interest is also involved in it. "Honesty is the best policy," is a proverbial truth which has stood, and will stand, the test of ages.

"Thou shalt not steal," is one of the Ten Commandments, delivered by the Almighty himself, for directing the conduct of his chosen people. This obligation was frequently inculcated and extended by the Jewish Legislator. "Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another." Again, "Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him. Ye shall do no unrighteousness in meteyard, in weight, or in measure, neither deal falsely; False balances are an abomination to the Lord; but a just weight is his delight. Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother?" Thus forcibly does the Old Testament inculcate Honesty among men: and in the New Testament the same obligation is equally, though perhaps not so frequently, enjoined: "Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good. Let no man defraud his brother in any matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such." Above all, let us remember this important truth, that "neither thieves, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God."

Honesty in our actions can scarcely exist without veracity in our words. The advantages which arise to society and to individuals, from speaking the truth, and from punctuality in all our promises and engagements, are not easily calculated; and it is to be lamented that men, who would be considered as moral characters, and who, perhaps, would resent the charge of a lie with the challenge of a duel; that such as these should pay little attention to this indispensable moral obligation. Falsehood is an evil which pervades almost all classes of society, to a degree that is really affecting. That such an evil should so much prevail in a Christian country, whose religious code is so express and unequivocal in condemning it, is indeed a subject of astonishment, as well as of sorrow. To enumerate all the passages in Scripture, which apply to this subject, may not be necessary: the few following ones sufficiently indicate the view, in which the vice of lying was held by the inspirer of the sacred penmen: "Thou shalt not bear false witness. Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord; but they that deal truly are his delight. The getting of treasures by a lying tongue, is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death. Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds. Put away

lying, and speak every man truth to his neighbour." These are strong and clear injunctions; and when we add to them the solemn declaration of the final state of this class of sinners, how awful is the consideration! "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Men sometimes think themselves honest in their actions, and true in their words, who yet are deficient in real sincerity and uprightness. Our holy religion, however, requires us to "lay aside all guile and hypocrisies, and all evil-speaking." We are told, that "the Lord loveth the upright: Thou most upright, dost weigh the path of the just." It was a consoling reflection of the primitive believers in Christ, when they could say: "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that, in simplicity and godly sincerity; not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God; we have had our conversation in the world." How desirable a virtue is true sincerity! But the deceiver and the hypocrite are hateful both to God and man. "The hope of the hypocrite shall perish." His hope, both here and hereafter, faileth him: and in that awful day, when final judgment will be passed upon mankind, not only "the sinners in Zion shall be afraid; but fearfulness will surprise the hypocrite."

CHAPTER II.

Love or Chairity.

LOVE to our fellow-creatures is a duty which is inculcated, both in the Jewish and the Christian dispensations. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is a precept that is found in both Testaments: but it is in the New Testament that this duty is most particularly enforced; and is extended beyond all former example. It is indeed, as has been already shown, the basis of all those duties which we owe one to another: and where this principle prevails in the heart, other moral precepts are, in a great measure, superseded. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Again, "Love one another with a pure heart fervently." Here is an essential circumstance attached to this virtue; a pure heart. The heart of man, in its natural and corrupt state, either rejects this Divine principle of action, or mixes with it so much of its own corruption, as to produce a false or mistaken charity, which is frequently destructive of those virtues that true love is intended to promote. But it must by no means be rejected, because it is abused. When our love one to another

proceeds from, and is united with, the love which we owe to the Divine Being, it forms, without exception, the brightest jewel in the crown of a Christian. The description which the Apostle Paul gives of it, has already been cited; and so much said on the subject, in general, that it may now be sufficient to treat on its effects; or those particular virtues which result from it.

1. MERCY and COMPASSION may be considered as the first fruits of love. The former is a duty which applies principally to the conduct of superiors towards inferiors, whilst the latter extends equally to all the relations of life, when in a state of affliction or trial. These duties are forcibly enjoined upon us in Holy Writ: "Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts: Show mercy and compassion, every man to his brother; and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, nor the strangers, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart. Be ye merciful as your father also is merciful. Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love, as brethren; be pitiful, be courteous. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction; and to keep himself unspotted from the world. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with

them that weep." Thus do the Holy Scriptures inculcate these amiable virtues; and indeed they are virtues, which, from various considerations, it highly becomes us to exercise towards each other. Let us ever bear in mind this desirable benediction: "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy."

2. The virtues on which we have just been treating, are nearly allied to that CANDOUR in judging one another, which forms a very prominent part in the Christian religion. It is what is frequently distinguished in common conversation, by the name of Charity; but, properly speaking, it is only one of the fruits of what is called Charity in the Scriptures. It is however a fruit, of no small value, and which we should all be found producing in our conduct: and when it is considered, how quickly we can all feel, when we are treated without candour, or charity, it seems peculiarly proper, that all should give what all are desirous to receive. How forcible and argumentative is the commandment of our blessed Lord, on this subject: "Judge not, that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam which is in thy own eye? Thou hypo-

write, first cast the beam out of thy own eye ; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

It is, indeed, affecting to observe, with what keenness and asperity persons often censure the failings of others, with whose faults, if a fair comparison were made, their own would appear as the beam to the mote ; and it may be not unfrequently observed, how freely some persons censure failings or vices in others, to which they themselves are peculiarly prone.

The Apostle Paul makes some excellent observations in his Epistle to the Romans, on the failing of which we are now treating : " Who art thou that judgest another man's servant ? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Why dost thou judge thy brother ? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother ? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God ; let us not therefore judge one another any more." Thus does the Christian religion recommend liberality of sentiment, whilst it guards against having fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, and even commands to reprove them. It is, indeed, necessary, whilst we cherish those tender dispositions of mind, to take heed, that we " touch not the unclean thing ;" nor give

encouragement to others, in principles or practices inconsistent with the pure gospel of Christ. In these cases, it is proper to attend to this precept: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord; and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you; I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." But even, when an attention to this precept is necessary, we ought not to forget another command: "Let all your things be done with charity."

The following observations on the subject of Candour, by a late writer,* are at once so just and liberal, that it is apprehended they may be suitably introduced here: "True candour is altogether different from that guarded inoffensive language, and that studied openness of behaviour, which we so frequently meet with among men of the world.—Smiling, very often, is the aspect, and smooth are the words, of those who inwardly are the most ready to think evil of others. That Candour which is a christian virtue, consists not in fairness of speech, but in fairness of heart. It may want the blandishment of external courtesy, but supplies its place with humane, and generous liberality of sentiment. Its manners are unaffected; and its professions cordial. Exempt, on

* Dr. Blair

the one hand, from the dark jealousy of a suspicious mind, it is no less removed, on the other, from that easy credulity which is imposed on by every specious pretence. It is perfectly consistent with extensive knowledge of the world; and with due attention to our own safety. In that various intercourse which we are obliged to carry on with persons of every different character, suspicion, to a certain degree, is a necessary guard. It is only when it exceeds the bounds of prudent caution, that it degenerates into vice. There is a proper mean between undistinguishing credulity and universal jealousy, which a sound understanding discerns, and which the Man of Candour studies to preserve."

"He makes allowance for the mixture of evil with good; which is to be found in every human character. Under the influence of personal resentment, he can be just to the merit of an enemy. He never lends an open ear to those defamatory reports, and dark suggestions, which, among the tribes of the censorious, circulate with so much rapidity, and meet with such ready acceptance. As long as an action can be ascribed to different motives, he holds it as no mark of sagacity to impute it always to the worst. When he must condemn, he condemns with regret; and without those aggravations which the

severity of others adds to the crime. He listens calmly to the apology of the offender, and readily admits every extenuating circumstance which equity can suggest. How much soever he may blame the principles of any sect or party, he never confounds, under one general censure, all who belong to that party. He charges them not with such consequences of their tenets as they refuse and disavow. He commiserates human frailty; and judges of others according to the principles by which he would think it reasonable that they should judge of him. In a word, he views men and actions in the clear sunshine of charity and good-nature; and not in that dark and sullen shade which jealousy and party spirit throw over all characters."

But it is not only in our sentiments and remarks on each other, that candour and liberality of mind manifest themselves; they also produce a generosity of conduct in the different transactions and relations which occur between man and man. Of this we have a striking example in the conduct of Abram towards his kinsman Lot, at a time when the land was not sufficient for their mutual accommodation, and a strife arose between their herdmen on this account. Then it was that "Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between

me and thee, nor between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." How amiable, how liberal, how replete with brotherly kindness, was the conduct of Abram on this occasion! Were a similar disposition cherished under similar circumstances, how would it lessen the feuds and discords which arise amongst men! and how would peace and harmony exist, where envying and strife, with their long train of malevolent attendants, predominate, to the disgrace of human nature, and of that holy religion, of which many who practise these things are making profession! But whatever reflections may be cast on Christianity from the existence of these evils among its professors, this religion is perfectly clear of them. The precepts of its Divine Author, and of its early promulgators, supported by their examples, bear a uniform testimony against that narrow selfish policy, which so much prevails among those who are called christians, and which is in direct violation of these Apostolic injunctions: "Let all your things be done with charity. By love serve one another: for all the law is fulfilled in one word, even

in this, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

3. ALMSGIVING or administering to the wants of the poor, is another of the effects of that love which we owe to each other. It is a duty, which, among Christians, is universally acknowledged, as being incumbent on those whom Providence has blessed with circumstances adapted to it; yet it appears not to have much engaged the attention of heathen moralists. The Bible, however, contains so many advices and directions on this head, as must tend to exalt the religion which it recommends, in the view of every impartial observer. The Mosaic law gives several excellent precepts on this subject, of which it may be sufficient to recite the following: "If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren, within any of thy gates in thy land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thy hand from thy poor brother. Thou shalt surely give him; and thy heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him, because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thy hand unto: for the poor shall never cease out of the land; therefore I command

thee, saying, thou shalt open thy hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy Land." How full, how liberal, how promotive of the benevolent affections, is this Divine command !

It seems to have afforded Job no small consolation in his afflictions, that he had, when in prosperity, carefully attended to the state of the poor. The forcible language in which he repels the insinuations of his mistaken friends, shows the high estimation in which he held this virtue : " If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail ; or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof ; (for from my youth he was brought up with me as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb) ; if I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering ; if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep ; if I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless when I saw my help in the gate ; then let my arm fall from my shoulder blade, and my arm be broken from the bone ; for destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure." In the book of Psalms, we find great importance attached to this duty ; " Blessed is he that

considereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing; thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness."

Solomon also, among his many wise proverbs, strongly inculcates this benevolent virtue: "He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his maker; but he that honoureth Him hath mercy on the poor. He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor. He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, will he pay him again."

The neglect of this duty formed a frequent subject of complaint against the Jews, by the prophets who were sent unto them. Isaiah, in expostulating with that people for the insincere manner, in which they observed their religious fasts, shows them what are the essential attendants of a true fast; among which he points out the discharge of the duty on which we are now treating: "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out, into thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thy own flesh." And a little after he says: "If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

and if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul ; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day."

It seems that the Jews, after the captivity, and their restoration to their own land, had so far attended to the remonstrances and instruction of their prophets, that almsgiving was become a popular virtue : yet it appears that many performed it in such a manner as to indicate that their motive was not pure benevolence : but that they were seeking the praise of men, and preferring it to the praise of God. Thus we find that the first notice which our blessed Lord takes of this duty, was to caution those who were in the practice of it, against that vain glorious disposition with which they dispensed their alms : "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them." Here it should be observed, that the prohibition is not absolute against performing charitable actions, so that they will be publicly known ; for this, in some cases, is not only unavoidable, but may be also proper, in order to let out lights shine before men, and our examples become beneficial to others ; but the prohibition lies against the motive, "that they may be seen of men ;" for where this disposition prevails, the consequence is serious and lamentable : "Ye

have no reward of your Father who is in heaven."

But whilst our Saviour gave this salutary caution, with respect to the performance of acts of charity, he was not negligent in promoting an attention to this duty. He alludes to it on various occasions, besides giving these positive injunctions: "Give alms of such things as ye have. When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind." Thus did our Lord inculcate a regard for the poor and the distressed, whilst he checked that ostentatious disposition, which seems to have been, at least, as prevalent at that day, as at the present time.

The apostles seldom omitted inculcating this virtue, either directly or indirectly, in their epistles to the early christians: "To do good and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. He who soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he who soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully. Every man, as he hath proposed in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver. If a brother or a sister be naked and destitute of daily food; and one of you say unto him, Depart in peace, be warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which

are needful to the body ; what doth it profit ? Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him ?”

We shall conclude this subject with the following direction of the Apostle Paul to Timothy : “ Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy ; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”

4. PEACEABLENESS is another disposition which flows from that principle of Love which the Christian religion enjoins. It is not the enjoyment of secret peace only, that is the fruit of righteousness ; but it also produces a peaceable disposition of mind and conduct towards others : “ The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.” We find that this subject formed a material part of that angelic song, with which the gospel of Christ was introduced into the world : “ Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, good will unto men.” Consistently with this

language, our blessed Redeemer frequently inculcated dispositions of mind, which tend to promote those great and important objects. In his most excellent sermon on the Mount, the peace-makers are particularly marked with his Divine benediction : " Blessed are the peace-makers ; for they shall be called the children of God." Indeed every virtue, recommended in the beatitudes, tends to promote " Peace on earth, and good will to men." If our Lord has said, " I am not come to send peace on earth, but a sword ;" it was not because his holy religion was incompatible with peace ; but because he foresaw the violence and persecution which would be excited against it, by men, whose views and dispositions were opposed to the pure and peaceable Spirit of the gospel.

In the Epistles of the Apostles, a peaceable disposition is strongly inculcated among the primitive christians : " Be at peace among yourselves. Study to be quiet and do your own business. As much as in you lieth, live peaceably with all men. Follow peace with all men ; and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Be ye all of one mind, endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." Thus does our holy religion inculcate a peaceable and peace-making spirit ; and we

should remember, that "He who soweth discord among brethren," is classed by the wise King Solomon among those whom "the Lord hateth. Let us, therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith we may edify one another."

5. **FORGIVENESS** of Injuries is intimately connected with a peaceable disposition, and is indeed its inseparable companion. When we consider how great importance is attached to this duty by our blessed Redeemer, and how much our present and our future happiness depend upon it, it is wonderful, that so little of the practice of it should be found among professing Christians of all denominations. We seem, in general, readily to find some salvo, some circumstance or other, which does not make the doctrine of forgiveness applicable to our case. We perhaps say, and even make ourselves believe, that we forgive, when our conduct indicates to others the very reverse. But it is of the greatest importance that we should not deceive ourselves on this subject, if what our Saviour has said be, as doubtless it is, true and certain: "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses." What an awful consideration is this! and how can we trifle with, and seek to deceive ourselves, on a subject in which so much is at stake!

This duty is scarcely mentioned by heathen moralists; and we do not find much said respecting it in the Old Testament. When that book was written, the dispensation of an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, the law of retaliation, was in force. It was, however, a virtue which even then, at times, manifested itself, and was occasionally inculcated. The example of David, in his conduct towards Nabal, after the forcible, and even sublime, expostulation of Abigail, together with his own generous disposition towards Saul, his violent persecutor, shows that this virtue had considerable place in his heart, and indeed exhibits the royal prophet in an amiable point of view. His imprecations upon his enemies, which appear in the Book of Psalms, may be considered rather in a prophetic light, than as his praying for their ruin and destruction. This idea is favoured by an alteration in the translation, of which the Hebrew is capable.* But if even this should not be admitted, it ought to be considered that David was by no means forward in revenging himself. His mind appears to have been strongly impressed with this Divine declaration: "To me belongeth ven-

* The imperative mood, and the future tense, being often used in Hebrew for each other.

gence and recompense." He was therefore, particularly cautious, on many occasions, of becoming his own avenger, and left his enemies to Divine retribution. When we consider the dispensation under which he lived, and the power which he possessed, we may see much to admire in that part of his disposition, which a slight consideration may have led some to think was exceptionable.

Solomon, who was peaceable as well as wise, gives us a few precepts, inculcating the duty of forgiveness. "The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression. Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me. I will render to the man according to his work." And again, "Say not thou, I will recompence evil; but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee."

But after all it must be acknowledged, that this is a virtue which gives Christianity a distinguishing pre-eminence above every other religion. It is not indeed a mere affectation of forgiveness, which the religion of Christ requires: this religion goes to the heart; it requires us even to "love our enemies; to bless them that curse us; to do good to them that hate us; and to pray for them that despitefully use and persecute us;" and all for this cogent reason, "that we may be the children of our Father, who is in

Heaven ; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good ; and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

When Peter inquired of his Lord, " How often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him ? [Shall I do it] until seven times ? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, till seven times, but till seventy times seven ;" intimating, what all must, on consideration, allow to be reasonable, that our forgiveness of others should be in some proportion to those mercies, which we receive from the fountain of Divine love and mercy ; and these, we cannot but acknowledge are innumerable.

In that excellent model of prayer, which our blessed Lord gave to his disciples, we are taught to ask the forgiveness of our trespasses in the same proportion " as we forgive those who trespass against us." In another place it is shown, that forgiveness is an essential qualification, for presenting our prayers at the footstool of Divine grace, with acceptance : " When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any ; that your Father also, who is in Heaven, may forgive you your trespasses : but if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father, who is in Heaven, forgive your trespasses."

The Apostles were careful to recommend the practice of this duty, and those virtues

which are intimately connected with it, to the christian churches: "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you. See that ye render to no man evil, for evil, but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men. Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so do ye."

6. HOSPITALITY is another virtue which arises from brotherly love. It consists in the entertainment of strangers, or those who are not of our own family. The state of the civilized world is at present such as to preclude the promiscuous and unrestrained exercise of it. It is, however, a duty, from which a benevolent mind, when in suitable circumstances, cannot discharge itself; and when the performance of it is accompanied with temperance and sobriety, it may afford both pleasure and profit. This virtue is recommended to us, both by example and precept, in the Holy Scriptures. Abraham and Lot afford two instances of the exercise of this duty, with various circumstances attending it, which give us a high opinion of

the simplicity and liberality of their characters, as well as of the times in which they lived. From these two examples, the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews recommends the practice of this virtue to the primitive christians : " Be not forgetful to entertain strangers ; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." To be " given to Hospitality," is one of those duties which the apostle Paul recommends to the Romans ; and among the qualifications, which the same Apostle points out as necessary for a Bishop or Overseer in the Christian Church, it is required that he be " a lover of Hospitality." The Apostle Peter likewise recommends this virtue in simple, but forcible language. " Use Hospitality one to another without grudging." And our blessed Lord recommends it, particularly towards those whom he is pleased to send forth as Ministers of his gospel. " He that receiveth you, receiveth me ; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward ; and he that receiveth a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give unto these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall not go without his reward."

7. FRIENDSHIP is another production of true love; but it is an enjoyment rather than a duty. It implies a mutual attachment between individuals, by which they prefer one another to others of their acquaintance. We have a fine instance of this mutual regard, transmitted to us in the Holy Scriptures. David and Jonathan afford an example of as close an attachment, and disinterested friendship, as any that we have recorded in ancient or modern history. Passing over the various instances of their friendship which are particularized, I shall only recite that part of David's lamentation over Saul and Jonathan after their death, which relates to the latter; and to heighten our ideas of the strength of the attachment, it should be remembered that David and Jonathan were, in effect, rivals for a crown; "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women."

There are some pertinent observations made by Solomon on the subject of Friendship: "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go." Much, indeed, depends on the choice of our

friends; but it may be sufficient to observe, that if religion and virtue be not the basis, or, at least, the companions of friendship, it is deficient in its most beneficial constituents: and, instead of being an advantage, will be an injury to us. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God."

In the New Testament, we have but little which applies to this subject; for, as is already remarked, friendship is not so much a duty as an enjoyment: but when we consider the dispositions of mind which are there recommended, we shall find, that the Christian religion is particularly favourable to those attachments which constitute true friendship. Even our blessed Redeemer, though he was "the Saviour of all men," manifested the partiality of his affection to the Apostle John, who is styled, "the Disciple whom Jesus loved:" and it may be remembered, that Lazarus and his sisters, were distinguished by such peculiar marks of our Lord's friendship, as produced this observation from one of the Evangelists; "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sisters, and Lazarus."

CHAPTER III.

Humility.

AFTER treating on the various effects of Christian Charity, it may be proper next to notice the very important virtue, Humility.

This virtue consists in not thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think; and in having such a moderate opinion of our own attainments, with a proper sense of our own imperfections, as becomes beings dependent upon a higher power for every possession, and for every quality that can make us truly great or good. It also requires that this opinion should manifest itself by resignation to the Divine will, and by condescension to our fellow-creatures. These dispositions every considerate mind must allow to be highly proper and necessary. "Who maketh thee to differ from another; and what hast thou, that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" Here we have an incontrovertible argument for the necessity of this virtue; and when we consider who it was that said, "I am meek and lowly in heart," it can surely be no degradation to any of our characters, to en-

deavour to "walk, even as He (the Son of God) walked."

The advantages arising from Humility are almost incalculable, whether we consider its consequences in producing comfort to our own minds, in promoting the happiness of our various connexions in life, or in procuring for us the favour of that Divine Being, who has repeatedly declared, that the humble are the peculiar objects of his fatherly care and regard. There is indeed, abundant reason to believe, that Humility contributes more than any other virtue, to make us comfortable to ourselves, "acceptable to God, and approved of men."

A humble-disposition of mind is both a religious and a moral duty; a virtue which should be exercised both towards God and Man: but there are many who can, perhaps very feelingly, humble themselves before their Creator who yet cannot exercise this virtue towards their fellow-creatures; and whose Humility, for that reason, is very imperfect. Although this virtue is of so great importance, we do not find it recommended in any ancient book of morals except the Bible. Heathen morality entirely dismissed it from the catalogue of virtues; but it is worthy of observation, that there are more texts placed under this head, in conjunction with its opposite, Pride, by

those who have selected passages from the Bible on the duties of men, than under almost any other duty.

A French writer* makes the following observations on this virtue; "Humility is commonly said to be the particular and distinctive virtue of a Christian. The Heathens knew nothing of it; the Jews rarely practised it. There are many Christians who, in that, are like the Heathens; but more who are like the Jews. If Humility makes the distinction of the Christian Religion, we may say, that there is no virtue more rare in Christianity than that by which it is distinguished." To this quotation I shall add another from an English author†: "Sense shines with the greatest beauty when it is set in Humility. A humble, able man, is a jewel worth a kingdom."

Solomon seems to have been peculiarly sensible of the excellence of this virtue, and of the many evils which arise from pride, its opposite vice. "A proud look" stands first among those seven things which he says, "the Lord hateth, and which are an abomination unto him. When pride cometh, then cometh destruction; but with the lowly is wisdom. Only by pride cometh contention. Every one that is proud in

* De Villiers.

† William Penn.

heart, is an abomination to the Lord. Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Better is it to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud. A man's pride shall bring him low ; but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit. A high look, and a proud heart, is sin. He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife. Proud and haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath."

Great and numerous, we see, are the evils which result from Pride. It is, indeed, the grand destroyer of human happiness ; and, perhaps, produces more human misery than all other vices put together. Ambition, envy, jealousy, discontent, contemptuousness, and contention, are its genuine offspring. It is soon offended ; and, what is rather extraordinary, it is often very careless in giving offence to others. When we consider the many public and private calamities which result from this vice, together with the unreasonableness of such imperfect beings as we are, cherishing it in our bosoms ; we shall be sensible of the justice of this proverbial observation, by an apocryphal writer ; " Pride was not made for men ; nor furious anger for them that are born of a woman."

Many are the gracious promises which are left upon record, for our encouragement to cultivate a truly humble state of mind.

“God will save the humble person. He forgetteth not the cry of the humble.

Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly. He giveth grace to the humble; but he beholdeth the proud afar off.”

And it is a circumstance which deserves our notice, that a humble disposition of mind was the first which engaged

our Lord's attention, in those beatitudes, with which he prefaced his admirable sermon on the Mount :

for it is generally understood, that Humility is, at least, included in the virtue to which he alluded, when he said ;

“Blessed are the poor in spirit ; for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.”

The Apostle Paul gives the following admonitions on this subject :

“I say to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think ;

but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Mind not high things. Be not wise in your own conceits ; but condescend to men of low estate.

Let us not be desirous of vain glory ; for if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.”

To these admonitions we may add this exhortation of the

Apostle Peter; "Ye younger, submit yourselves to the elder; yea, all of you be subject one to another; and be clothed with Humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." These are strong recommendations of the virtue of Humility; but it is pecnliarly enhanced in our view, when we consider the striking and encouraging language of the Almighty, by the prophet Isaiah: "Thus said the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place: with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit; to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

CHAPTER IV.

Meekness..

THIS is a virtue very similar to Humility, and is sometimes confounded with it. They are, however, quite distinct ; and this distinction may, perhaps, be most easily shown, by stating, that the vice opposite to Meekness, is anger ; whilst pride, as was before mentioned, is the opposite to Humility.

Meekness gives its possessor many advantages in passing through life ; particularly from that state of self-government which it produces, and which is indeed its inseparable companion. When it is genuine, it not only makes a man master of himself, but gives him also a great ascendancy over others. "A soft answer turneth away wrath." There is, however a false Meekness, (and the same distinction might have been made on Humility,) which, proceeding from insensibility, affectation, or some mistaken apprehensions of this duty, tends to provoke rather than to allay anger. But we must not, on this account, slight or neglect the cultivation of this important virtue, to which many precious promises are attached in holy writ..

Moses was a remarkable example of meekness; for, during the forty years in which he led the Israelites through the wilderness, and under the many provocations which he had to bear, from their impatient, discontented spirit, we do not find that he more than once lost the command of his temper. So remarkable was he for the exercise of this virtue, under the most trying circumstances, that it is said, "The man Moses was very meek, above all the men who lived on the face of the earth."

The Psalmist frequently shows the excellency of this state of mind, and that it is peculiarly favoured by the Divine Being. "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way. God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. He will beautify the meek with salvation. The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." To this passage our blessed Lord appears to allude, when he quotes the first part of it, and prefixes his Divine benediction to this state of mind. "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth."

In the Book of Proverbs, the importance and excellence of this virtue is clearly shown, and its opposite vice strongly censured. "He that is slow to anger is better than the

"mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city. He that hath no rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls. He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly. A wrathful man stirreth up strife; but he that is slow to anger, appeaseth strife. Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of fools." Although anger may at times take us unawares, yet great care should be exercised that it do not rest in our hearts. To prevent this, seems to have been the Apostle's view, when he says: "Be ye angry and sin not; let not the sun go down on your wrath." These words are considered, not as a command to be angry, but to avoid sinful anger. A very respectable Translator* renders it, "*If ye be angry, sin not.*"

Meekness is a virtue which is particularly recommended to the female sex, by the Apostle Peter: but when we consider the great importance which he attaches to it, we must allow that it would be greatly the interest of both sexes to obtain possession of it. In giving advice respecting the adorning of Christian wives, he first shows what it should not be; and then, in setting forth what it should be, he expresses himself

* Abp. Newcome.

thus ; " Let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible ; even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price."

CHAPTER V.

Temperance and Sobriety:

THESE Virtues relate principally to moderation in eating and drinking: and when we consider the many evils, which result from the violation of the laws that Temperance prescribes, we must be sensible of the necessity of regulating our conduct according to its salutary rules. We are not called upon to deny ourselves of the moderate, and what is, in the event, the most pleasurable, gratification of those appetites, which our all-wise Creator has made necessary for our existence. We know, that "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving." But to this, and to all other knowledge, we are required to add Temperance; and so to regulate our conduct as to fulfil the apostolic precept: "Whether ye eat or drink; or whatsoever ye do; do all to the glory of God."

We find Temperance enumerated by the Apostle Paul among "the fruits of the Spirit." In another place, he shows its importance for attaining a superiority over others: "He that striveth for mastery is temperate in all things:" and in describing the virtues necessary for a Bishop, or Overseer in the

116 TEMPERANCE AND SOBRIETY.

Church, this virtue is so particularly enforced, with some others which have been, or will be, treated on, as to render the introduction of the passage here not improper: "A Bishop must be blameless as the steward of God: not self-willed; not soon angry; not given to wine; no striker; not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality: a lover of good men; sober, just, holy, temperate."

We have a few sorrowful instances mentioned in holy writ, of men, whose general character was excellent, being overtaken with intemperance: but when we consider the lamentable consequences resulting from their conduct, it ought rather to excite our disgust and abhorrence of the crime, than to be an encouragement to a practice, which degrades a man below a brute.

When gluttony and drunkenness were added to disobedience to parents, they were, by the law of Moses, punishable with death. If the parents "shall say unto the elders of his city, this our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice, he is a glutton and a drunkard; all the men of his city shall stone him with stones that he die; so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear and fear."

Solomon, in his book of religious and moral maxims, shows the evils attendant on

intemperance, and gives several exhortations against it. "Be not among wine-bibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh; for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty. Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise. He that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father." The following is a striking description of the lamentable consequences which follow excess in drinking. "Who hath wo? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup; when it moveth itself aright: at last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thy eyes shall behold strange women, and thy heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea; or as he that lieth on the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not."

The prophet Isaiah repeatedly pronounced wo to those who are guilty of intemperance. "Wo to them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength

118 TEMPERANCE AND SOBRIETY.

to mingle strong drink. Wo to the crown of pride, (or as Lowth translates it, to the proud crown of) the drunkards of Ephraim."

On this subject our blessed Lord, whose conduct was equally remote from the extremes of the ascetic and the glutton, gives this pressing exhortation to his followers: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time, your hearts be over-charged with surfeiting and drunkenness." The Apostle Paul, with his usual attention to moral duties, gives many cautions against the vice of intemperance. "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be ye filled with the Spirit. Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness." And we should remember that "drunkenness, revellings and such like," are enumerated among the "works of the flesh," concerning which the Apostle declares "that they who do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

CHAPTER VI

Chastity.

THIS virtue relates principally to the conduct of the sexes towards each other. It is not confined to our actions ; but extends to our words, and even to the disposition of our minds. In order to maintain this virtue, great watchfulness is necessary ; and when temptations to violate it are presented, our only security is immediately to withdraw from them : for this reason the Apostle Paul gives these cautions ; “ Flee youthful lusts ; ” “ Flee fornication.”

The violation of the laws of Chastity, is attended with the most serious consequences, both to the bodies and souls of mankind ; and although custom, vicious custom, has diminished the loss of reputation on the part of the men ; yet, we have no reason to doubt that the crime is equal in both sexes ; and when we consider the infamy which the female character sustains, by the breach of this moral duty, that consideration alone ought to be a sufficient reason for checking a vice, which often degrades a Being, the most amiable of all the works of God, below the most abject part of the brute creation : for what is there, in all the pro-

ductions of nature, so loathsome and disgusting, as some of those abandoned females, who, particularly in large towns, frequently obtrude themselves upon our view? But when we trace their situation to its source; and consider the cause of the miseries of many who may not have arrived to the same degree of hardness; when we thus examine the origin of these evils, and find it generally to exist in the depravity and seduction of the men; how ought we to guard against the first attacks of a vice, which is productive of consequences so lamentable.

Much, however, depends on the conduct of women for preventing the evil now under consideration. Were their conduct regulated by that modesty and sobriety, recommended in the Holy Scriptures, the propensity to this vice would be greatly checked, and its extension much diminished. Their disposition, their manners, their dress, and their general deportment are of great importance, and require a greater degree of caution than is frequently exercised. It is, indeed, deeply to be regretted, that the following admonition by an Apostle of Jesus Christ, should be so little attended to, as there is reason to fear it is, by many who call themselves Christians: "I will also that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with,

broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but, which becometh women professing godliness, with good works,"

I wish to say as little as possible on this subject, remembering that the vices alluded to are such as the Apostle says, should "not be once named among" Christians. But by this expression he might mean, that they should not be named, as existing among them; or that they should not be, as they too often are, subjects of light, and even of public conversation, to the violating of the apostolic injunction, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth: but that which is good, to the use of edifying." One or other of these constructions seems necessary, to reconcile the Apostle's advice with his practice; for he has named some of the violations of Chastity, in all, or most of his Epistles.

When it is considered how much the Holy Scriptures have pointed out the necessity of purity or chastity; how strongly they have inculcated this virtue; and how forcibly they have represented the evils attending a violation of it; it is strange that, among a people professing Christianity, Chastity should be so little esteemed and insisted upon, as it is by many who make this high profession. How little are these admonitions attended to: "Walk not as others

gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,—who being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.” In the first of these passages we find a striking contrast between the purity of the christian religion, and the impurity of that of the Gentiles. Their very religion was contaminated with lasciviousness ; their deities, their worship, their laws, all conspired to promote this vice ; and their degradation to every kind of obscenity is too gross to be particularized. “ But we have not so learned Christ.” No ; Christianity is a pure religion : it not only teaches to abstain from the commission of these crimes ; but it even checks them in their first conception. “ He that looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart. Keep [then] thyself pure ;” remembering who it was that said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

But it is not in the New Testament only, that Purity and Chastity are recommended, and their opposite vices condemned. The Old Testament contains many excellent advices on this subject, and some examples

are related, from which we may draw much profitable instruction. When Abraham, with a very condemnable timidity, exposed his wife to the temptation of a neighbouring king, the sense which he manifested of the sin of adultery, is worthy the attention of many, who ought not to stand in need of such examples. The warm reimonstrance of Abimilech with Abraham, is indeed highly creditable to his character. "What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast (or wouldst have) brought on me, and my kingdom, a great sin? Thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done. And Abimilech said [further] unto Abraham, what sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?"

The example of Joseph, when he was a confidential slave in the house of Potiphar, and was tempted by his wicked mistress, is generally known; but the answer of this virtuous young man to her solicitation, will still bear repeating: "Behold, my master wotteth not, what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand. There is none greater in this house than I, neither hath he kept back any thing from me, but thee, because thou art his wife. How then can I do this wickedness, and sin against God?"

The crime of adultery is indeed censured by all nations, pretending to any degree of civilization ; and by many, even in what is considered a savage state. In the law of Moses it was particularly prohibited. "Thou shalt not commit adultery," was one of the Ten Commandments delivered to the Israelites at Mount Sinai ; and it is one of the crimes which were punishable with death. "The man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death." Although this may appear to some a severe punishment ; yet, certainly, the crime is much greater, than many for which death is inflicted in most christian countries.

But by the Jewish law, not only adultery, but fornication, or whoredom, were forbidden. "Do not prostitute thy daughter to cause her to be a whore, lest the land fall to whoredom, and become full of wickedness. There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite (or, as many translators render it, a whoremonger) of the sons of Israel."

In the Book of Proverbs, we have many instructive cautions against this sin, which show the fatal consequences that result from it. "The commandment is a lamp,

and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way to life; to keep thee from the evil woman; from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman. Lust not after her beauty in thy heart, neither let her take thee with her eye-lids; for by means of a whorish woman, a man is brought to a piece of bread; and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life." Again, "Remove thy way far from a strange woman, and come not near the door of her house; lest thou give thy honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel—and thou mourn at last when thy body, and thy flesh are consumed; and say, how have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof. Hearken unto me now, therefore, O ye children! and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thy heart incline to her ways; go not astray in her paths: for her house is the way to hell; going down to the chambers of death."

To conclude this subject, on which I have found it necessary to say more than I at first designed; let us remember the important declarations of the Holy Apostle: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification; that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles who know

not God. For God hath not called us ~~to~~ uncleanness, but unto holiness. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body: know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid. Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, shall inherit the kingdom of God: For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor ~~unclean~~ person, nor covetous (or rather libidinous) man, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words, for, because of these things, cometh the wrath of God on the children of disobedience." Thus certain it is, that "whoremongers and adulterers God will judge; and they shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is ~~the~~ second death."

CHAPTER VII.

Discretion or Prudence.

THIS is a Virtue of high importance, in regulating the whole of our conduct through life. It is often applied to the management of our temporal concerns, as preventing us from engaging in unwarrantable undertakings, and as inducing us to keep our expenses within our incomes. But this is not the whole of the objects it embraces. There is scarcely any concern in life, in which we do not need the aid of discretion. When better motives are wanting it may be profitably applied to the restraint of vice; and even our other virtues stand in need of its salutary restrictions. "A good man showeth favour and lendeth;" but, at the same time, "he guideth his affairs with discretion."

What we have on this subject in Holy Writ, is principally contained in the Proverbs of Solomon. He represents Prudence as being the intimate companion of Wisdom. "I, Wisdom, dwell with Prudence. The wise in heart shall be called prudent." Wisdom and Prudence are distinct acquisitions, and the former is very imperfect without the latter. "My son (says Solo-

128 DISCRETION OR PRUDENCE.

mon again) keep sound wisdom, and discretion. The discretion of a man deferreth his anger. A fool's wrath is presently known; but a prudent man covereth shame. A prudent man concealeth [his own] knowledge: but the mouth of fools proclaimeth foolishness. Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge; but a fool layeth open his folly. The simple believe every word; but the prudent man looketh well to his way. A prudent man foreseeeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished."

This virtue we find recorded among the qualities, which the Evangelical Prophet foretold should distinguish the character of the Messiah: "My servant shall deal prudently:" and we find the Apostle, in his Epistle to Titus, recommending that the young women, and young men, should be advised to the exercise of discretion.

The following remarks on this subject, by an eminent writer,* are so excellent, as to induce me to give them a place here: "Discretion is like an under-agent of Providence, to guide and direct us in the ordinary concerns of life. There are more shining qualities in the mind of man, but there is none so useful as discretion. It is

* Addison.

this, indeed, which gives a value to all the rest ; which sets them at work in their proper times and places ; and turns them to the advantage of the person who is possessed of them. Without it, learning is pedantry, and wit impertinence. Virtue itself looks like weakness ; the best parts only qualify a man to be more sprightly in errors, and active to his own prejudice." Again, " Though a man have all other perfections, and want discretion, he will be of no great consequence in the world ; but if he have this single talent in perfection, and but a common share of others, he may do what he pleases in his particular station of life." To this I would add, that when Humility is united with Prudence, they produce, in my apprehension, more than any other virtues, comfort and reputation for us in this world ; and are not without their use, in preparing us for a state of happiness, in that which is to come.

CHAPTER VIII.

Industry or Diligence.

THE importance of this virtue, for the reputable support of individuals and of families, is universally acknowledged. Indeed employment is beneficial in every station of life. The want of industry, when circumstances require its exercise, is represented by the Apostle, as making a man worse than an infidel. Yet, perhaps, he did not mean to say, that idleness is worse than infidelity; but that when it prevails among christians, it places their character, in this particular respect, below that of many who are infidels or heathens. The cause of Religion suffers much, when those who lay claim, and perhaps an extraordinary claim, to it, neglect a proper attention to their temporal concerns. By this means, they often fail of performing those engagements which they have entered into, become burdensome to others, and by distress and perplexity, often lose the little religion which they once possessed. It was, I apprehend, to correct this error in religion, that the Apostle thus strongly represents the consequences of neglecting a proper care for ourselves and our families: "If any provide

not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

Very strenuously does Solomon recommend industry, or diligence in business; and as severely does he reprobate the opposite vice. "The hand of the diligent maketh rich, and beareth rule; but the slothful shall be under tribute. The substance of a diligent man is precious. Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men. Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds; for riches are not for ever; and doth the crown endure to every generation?" To the sluggard, and respecting him, the following passages are appropriate: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise; who having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in summer; and gathereth her food in the harvest. I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding: and lo! it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles covered the face of it, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come."

132 INDUSTRY OR DILIGENCE.

as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man."

By the foregoing passages, we see the benefits of industry, and the evils consequent upon idleness. But let us be careful not to suffer the duty here recommended, so to absorb our attention, as to make us neglect any of those other duties which religion requires of us. At the same time that we are careful to be "not slothful in business," let us remember what immediately follows, but "servent in spirit, serving the Lord."

CHAPTER IX.

Frugality.

FRUGALITY consists in a sparing use of what we possess, and the avoiding of unnecessary expense. Both frugality and industry, are public as well as private virtues. They enrich nations as well as individuals. True frugality increases our enjoyments, as well as our possessions. It makes a man of moderate circumstances, and sometimes even a poor man, more independent than one who possesses great affluence; if the latter is not bounded by prudence in his expenses. Although this virtue is not much inculcated in direct terms, in the Holy Scriptures, yet it may be considered as necessarily included in that Prudence or Discretion of which we have already treated; and it is so unavoidable a consequence of many of the moral precepts, which are inculcated both in the Old and New Testament, that it may be considered a Christian virtue. That moderation which we are required to exhibit to all men, cannot be fully exercised without it; and when we abstain from all those indulgences and vices which the christian religion forbids, we are, at least, in the high road to frugality.

But whilst we are paying proper attention to this virtue, as well as to industry, we should beware of their extremes, a parsimonious and a covetous disposition. Both these are evils against which we have many scriptural admonitions: "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty." "He that soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly." "Thou shalt not covet any thing that is thy neighbour's," is the substance of the tenth commandment. Covetousness is, indeed, peculiarly marked with divine disapprobation: "The wicked blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth." "Incline my heart to thy testimonies, and not to covetousness," was a prayer of the Psalmist; and Solomon saith, "He that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days." This vice is severely reprehended by the Jewish prophets: "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth. With their mouth they show much love; but their heart goeth after their covetousness. Wo unto him that coveteth an evil covetousness."

Our blessed Lord frequently reproves this vice in the Pharisees of his time; and gives this solemn charge: "Take heed and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

The following instructive exhortations of the Apostle are of great importance to us all: "Godliness with contentment is great gain; for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare; and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition; for the love of money is the root of all evil: (or rather of all these evils :) which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. Therefore, let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

CHAPTER X.

On Cheerfulness.

WRITERS on Morality have not often given Cheerfulness a place among the duties of men. It is, however, sufficiently inculcated in the Scriptures, to induce us to notice it among these duties; and it is the more needful, because the enemies, and even some of the friends of religion, are apt to exclude it from the code of those virtues which Christianity requires.

Cheerfulness is a medium betwixt levity and gloominess. It is compatible with seriousness: and its purest and most permanent source, is a humble, grateful consideration of the many favours and blessings which we enjoy from the Divine Hand. A writer* lately quoted, makes these, among other, excellent observations upon it; "When I consider this cheerful state of mind, I cannot but look upon it as a constant, habitual gratitude to the great Author of nature. An inward cheerfulness is an implicit praise and thanksgiving to Providence under all its dispensations. It is a kind of acquiescence in the state wherein we are placed; and a

* Addison.

secret approbation of the Divine will in his conduct towards man."

By numbering, or considering, our blessings, the mind is prevented from dwelling improperly on the deprivations which we sustain, or think we sustain, in this probationary state of existence. In this disposition, the propriety of the Apostolic exhortation is seen and felt; "Rejoice evermore, and in every thing give thanks."

It is of no small importance in our passage through life, to maintain a cheerful state of mind. To this end an attention to the foregoing exhortation of the Apostle, and a consideration of the reasons for it, will be beneficial. Correspondent with this exhortation, are some observations of the wise Solomon, in which he shows the benefits of a cheerful disposition, which our translators, according to the terms then in use, have rendered, "a merry heart;" this he observes, "doth good like a medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the bones." These observations are, no doubt, intended to excite that cheerful vivacity, which is consistent with religion and virtue; and it appears to have been particularly the object of Solomon, to guard against a fretful disposition, by which many persons needlessly distress themselves; and at the same time, make those with whom they are connected, un-

comfortable. When sorrow proceeds from sufficient cause, and is duly regulated, this writer with others of the sacred penmen, shows its advantages, and excites sympathy with it. He also exposes the folly of a light, airy disposition of mind. Even in laughter, the heart is [often] sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness. I said of laughter, it is mad; and of mirth what doth it?"

Our blessed Lord was particularly careful to guard his disciples against a gloomy disposition and appearance. Even in the performance of a religious duty, which, above all others, implies serious humiliation, he prohibits an appearance that might improperly expose the employment of the mind, or cause an impression of extraordinary sanctity: "When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father, who is in secret; and thy Father, who seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." Notwithstanding the very serious importance of our Lord's mission, he affected no austerity, he practised no severity. He sympathized with the true mourners; but, at the same time, he encouraged and animated them with the prospect of better days. He endeavoured

to relieve his disciples from all anxiety respecting the things of this world : he taught them to be content with a little, and to be thankful for that little. His whole system (if I may so call it) was calculated to relieve the mind, and to give it a serenity and cheerfulness, above that of any other religion in the world.

It should, however, be considered, that previous to the perfect operation of religion on the mind, and, perhaps, even when the work is nearly completed, there will be many close conflicts and secret exercises, as well as outward trials, which will unavoidably, at times, depress the heart, and affect the countenance. We should also consider, that the minds and countenances of some persons are so formed by nature, as to deprive them of that cheerful appearance which others possess : these circumstances should excite much caution in judging one another in this respect. It must, however, be admitted by those who consider the duties and prospects which Christianity present, and particularly our blessed Lord's sermon on the mount, that gloominess and moroseness, as well as censoriousness and ostentation, form no part of the religion of Jesus Christ.

CLASS II.

PARTICULAR DUTIES.

CHAPTER I.

Of Husbands and Wives.

HAVING treated on the most important of those General Duties, which we owe to ourselves and one to another, it will be proper to proceed to the consideration of those Particular Duties, which our different relations in life require. We shall first take those which arise from the married state.

MARRIAGE is a divine institution of the greatest antiquity. It is the means which our all-wise Creator has ordained, to continue the existence of the human species; and the mutual attachment which it requires in those who are united by it, produces many duties necessary for the comfortable enjoyment of each other's society. Those who are joined in marriage are said to "become one flesh." Their objects and their interests are, or ought to be, the same. Their duties to each other differ very little.

Nature and religion having united in giving a degree of superiority to the man, a correspondent subjection, or obedience, becomes the duty of the woman. This law is necessary for the preservation of order; and it is observable, that through all the relative duties, Christianity settles the subordination in such a manner, as would, if it were attended to, remove many of those feuds, which destroy the peace of families, and of Governments. However, in the relation of man and wife, this subordination takes place in a smaller degree, than in any of the other relations. When we consider the near affinity described by Adam on Eve's being brought to him; "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh," it is evident that love, mutual love, is the first duty of the married state. "He who made them at the beginning, made them male and female and said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

The principal duties which arise from the relation of husband and wife, are enforced in the following scriptures. I shall first take those which relate to the men: "Rejoice with the wife of thy youth. The Lord

142 · OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES.

hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, agaist whom thou hast dealt treacherously; yet she is thy companion, and the wife of thy youth. Therefore take heed to your spirit, that none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. Husbands love your wives, and be not bitter against them. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. Ye husbands dwell with your wives according to knowledge; giving honour to the wife, as unto the weaker vessel; and as being heirs together of the grace of life.

To the women we have these exhortations: "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that if any obey not the word, they also may, without the word, be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation, coupled with fear: whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, and of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corrupti-

ble; even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price; for after this manner, in the old time, the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves; being in subjection to their own husbands."

I shall conclude this subject with part of the description which Solomon gives of a good wife: "Who can find a virtuous woman, for her price is far above rubies? The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her. She will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."

CHAPTER II.

Parents and Children.

THE power of parents over their children, in ancient times, was much greater than it is at present, at least in civilized states. This power extended formerly over the liberty, and even the life of the child. By the Mosaic law, filial disobedience was punishable by death ; but the power of inflicting it was taken from the parent, and vested in the elders of the city ; no doubt after a fair and open trial. In this, and in some other instances, where the Jewish law appears to be severe ; a great improvement is, nevertheless, made upon the practices of surrounding nations ; and, by the way, it may not be improper to inculcate an attention to this circumstance, in reading the Mosaic Institutions.

We have a striking example of parental duty in the Patriarch Abraham ; in the account of whom we find, that his attention to this duty, is assigned as a cause, why the destruction of Sodom was revealed to him. "And the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do ? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they

shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." Thus did this Patriarch inculcate by his example, what was taught by Moses, some centuries after his time : " These words which I command thee shall be in thy heart ; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children ; thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Consistently with this injunction was the advice of Solomon : " Train up a child in the way he should go ; and when he is old he will not depart from it." This may be considered as a correct general observation, to which, however, we meet with some sorrowful exceptions.

But children do not require instruction only ; sometimes correction is necessary : " Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child : but the rod of correction shall drive it out." Therefore, " he that spareth his rod, hateth his son ; but he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes. The rod and reproof give wisdom ; but a child left to himself, bringeth his mother to shame."

Christianity has completed what the Mosaic law began. It prohibits all unnecessary severity in parents, whilst it strongly enforces filial subjection. Thus the Apostle, considering, no doubt, that the heathens,

146 PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

amongst those to whom he was writing, dwelt, were in the practice of treating their children with great tyranny and cruelty, endeavours to check a disposition to severity in parents. "Fathers provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." And again; Ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Although the moral and religious education of children, both by instruction and restraint, is the duty of all parents, yet we find it is peculiarly required of a bishop or overseer in the Church of Christ, that he be "One that ruleth well his own house; having his children in subjection, with all gravity."

Whilst instruction, correction, and tenderness, are the duties of a parent; attention, obedience, and affection, are indispensable obligations, upon the child. "Honour thy father and thy mother," is a precept equally enforced by Judaism and Christianity. It is, indeed, the law of nature, as well as of grace. "Obey your Parents in the Lord; for this is right." There is nothing short of duty to God can supersede the duty of children to parents; and it is with this restriction only, that the following precept is given: "Obey your parents in all things; for this is right."

The duty of children to parents, however, does not merely consist in obedience to their commands; it also requires that affectionate regard, and even partiality, which disposes to conceal, rather than to expose, their faults. The different conduct of the children of Noah, when their father was overtaken with intemperance, affords an instructive instance of the consequences of filial regard, and filial contempt; and is an exemplification of this striking figurative observation of Solomon: "The eye which mocketh at his father, and refuseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." Thus, "Cursed is he that setteth light by his father or mother; and all the people shall say, Amen."

CHAPTER III.

Masters and Servants.

THE relation of Master and Servant was much improved by the Mosaic law; and still more by the Christian religion. The regulations of the former are excellent and liberal: "If thy brother, that dwelleth by thee, be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee, thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond-servant, but as a hired-servant, and as a sojourner he shall be with thee. Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour, but shalt fear thy God." To christian masters the Apostle gives these short, but comprehensive directions: "Masters give unto your servants that which is just and equal, forbearing threatening, knowing that your master also is in Heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."

Very beautiful and impressive is the language of Job, respecting his conduct towards his servants: "If I did despise the cause of my man-servant, or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me, what then shall I do when God riseth up; and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? Did not he that made me in the womb, make him? And did not one fashion us in the womb?"

To those in the station of servants, the following directions are given: "Be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God; not answering again; not purloining; but showing all good fidelity; that ye may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, in all things. Servants be subject to your own masters in all things; not only to the good and gentle; but also to the froward. Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God, and his doctrine, be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful, and beloved, partakers of the benefit."

CHAPTER IV.

Magistrates and Subjects.

GOVERNMENT and subordination are essential to civilized life; and we find accordingly, that the duties of Magistrates and Subjects are largely set forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. In the former, we have more directions given for the conduct of rulers, and in the latter, for that of subjects. We find no form of government particularly enjoined; but whatever may be the form, the duties of magistrates and of subjects are still the same. Monarchical Government being most common, Kings are most frequently mentioned; but the duties connected with this appellation, are equally applicable to the Chief Magistrate, or Supreme Power, in any nation.

“He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.” These qualifications are like the basis, on which all the other duties of Magistrates are laid. Thus we find, when Jethro recommended to Moses, to provide himself assistants in the Government of the Israelites, he pointed out the necessary qualification: “Thou shalt provide out of all the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating

covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens." To those who were thus chosen, Moses gave this charge: "Hear the causes between your brethern, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's." Similar to this was the charge of Jehoshaphat to those whom he appointed Judges in Israel. "Take heed what ye do; for ye judge not for man [only,] but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment: wherefore now, let the fear of God be upon you; take heed and do it; for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts." Thus were justice and judgment inculcated among the Jews; and when their rulers and judges became corrupted, the prophets did not neglect to censure them, and to declare the divine judgments against them: Isaiah pronounces "Wo unto them that decree unrighteous decrees; and that write grievousness which they have prescribed; to turn away the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that

widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless." Thus also does the prophet Habakkuk complain of the mal-administration of justice in his day: "The law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth; for the wicked doth compass about the righteous, therefore wrong judgment proceedeth." Zechariah complains that the following salutary counsel was rejected: "Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion, every man to his brother. And oppress not the widow; nor the fatherless; the stranger, nor the poor."

Solomon has many excellent observations on the qualifications and duties of rulers: "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked bear rule, the people mourn. Mercy and truth preserve the King; and his throne is upholden by mercy. It is an abomination to Kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness."

The line of conduct which is drawn for those who are in the station of subjects, is clear and strong; and were the precepts which are given us, duly considered, it would greatly tend to check that licentious disposition, which, under the pretence of liberty and freedom, is often indulged towards those whom Divine Providence has placed in authority over us. "Thou shalt

not speak evil of the ruler of thy people," was a Jewish institution, of which the Apostle Paul acknowledged the propriety; and both he and Peter are express in their injunctions upon the early christians, that they should show subjection to those who were placed over them. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath; but also for conscience' sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also, for they are God's ministers attending upon this very thing. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the King as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness; but as the servants of God. Honour all men; love the brotherhood; fear God; honour the King."

The consideration of the times and circumstances under which those advices were given, adds greatly to their force. They were given in the worst ages of the Roman government, by men who had lived in the times of Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius;

154: MAGISTRATES AND SUBJECTS.

and who wrote when Nero reigned. If these were the obligations of christians in such times, it is difficult to conceive a time, or circumstance, under which a true christian could be justified in violating those instructions. We may therefore safely attend to the admonitions of Solomon: "Fear thou the Lord and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change."

The duty which we owe to our Governors, may be said, in some respects, to resemble that which is due to our parents. The protection and other advantages, which we derive from them, should induce us to look with partiality, rather than prejudice, at their actions. If we cannot approve of all they do, we ought to consider that our knowledge of subjects relating to government, is not likely to be equal to theirs: they may likewise be acquainted with circumstances to which we are strangers. It should also be considered, that they are men, "subject to like passions as we are;" that the difficulties and temptations attending their situations are great: that we ourselves often err in the management of our small private concerns, either through want of judgment, or want of conduct; and that, even when neither of these are wanting, we cannot command success. If these considerations operated properly on our minds—

they would contribute to lessen that severity, with which many persons reflect on the conduct of those, whom Divine Providence has made rulers over them: and whom we are divinely commended to honour, as well as to obey.

There is one duty, arising from the subject now under consideration, which claims particular attention. This is the faithful payment of taxes imposed for the service of the government under which we live. It is to be regretted, that even among men who think they support an honest character, the violation of this duty, should scarcely be esteemed a crime. We should reflect that it is not the government only that is defrauded, which is no doubt wrong; but that our honest neighbours also suffer. The expences of government must be paid; and if one man does not contribute what is imposed upon him, his share must be supplied by others. But when a contraband trade is carried on, an honest man is still further injured; he is paralysed, as it were, in his efforts to provide a reputable subsistence for himself and his family. When these evils are considered, it is surprising that practices in themselves immoral, and productive of such consequences, should be deemed of so light importance as they frequently are. They are certainly in direct opposition to the precepts of our holy religion. When

our blessed Lord was thus interrogated, "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar or not?" after some previous observations, which manifest his opinion on the subject, he answers: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Indeed, he not only enjoined this duty upon others, but was himself an example of it, in the circumstance recorded by Matthew, chap. xvii. 24, &c. We ought, therefore, carefully to attend to the Apostolic injunction; "Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for love is the fulfilling of the law."

There is one obligation, however, which may supersede our duty to Magistrates, and indeed, occasionally, all the other relative duties. This is the duty which we owe to God and to our own conscience, with which the laws of men sometimes interfere. But if we cannot actively comply with that which the law requires, we ought patiently to suffer the penalty or punishment which it imposes. Thus the early Christians, with many others both before and since their time, have nobly and meekly suffered the loss of property, liberty and even life itself, in support of that faith and those practises which true religion requires.

CHAPTER VI.

On Patriotism.

THIS is a duty which we owe to the Country in which we live, and from which we generally derive those benefits and comforts which render our lives agreeable and happy. The Love of our Country attaches both to place and people, and induces us to prefer its real interests to those of any other nation or people, and even to our own concerns; subject, however, to those restrictions which justice and prudence impose on all our actions; and, by no means, excluding a regard for the welfare of other countries.

When we consider the many advantages, which those derive from one another in a state of society, who inhabit the same Country, are bound by the same Laws, and are subject to the same Rulers; and when we reflect how much the happiness of individuals depends on the prosperity of the whole; we ought to consider ourselves under a moral obligation, to promote the general good of those with whom we are thus united, so far as Divine Providence has afforded us the means and opportunity of doing it.

Some of the enemies of the Bible, and even some of its friends have suggested, that the religion which it inculcates, is unfavourable to Patriotism. Controversy is not my present business; but I trust that whilst inculcating this virtue, it will be found that the suggestion is without foundation.

True religion, or, in other words, the religion which is taught in the Bible, is a principle, which is unbounded in its operation. Its most prominent feature is, Universal Love, without respect to the boundaries of sea and land: and to promote the happiness of the human race all the world over, is its principal object. This object is so much inculcated in the Holy Scriptures, and particularly in the New Testament, as to account, in degree, for the mistake into which some persons have fallen, in supposing that some of the peculiar, social virtues are not sufficiently recommended. What is before written on these virtues, will, I apprehend, be sufficient to show, that the Christian Religion is peculiarly adapted to all the relations of life: and that, if it does not foster the ambitious views, of some of its professors, it is because the happiness of men is incompatible with those views, to which they would, perhaps, apply the name of Patriotism.

Of all the instances of this virtue which are recorded in history, ancient or modern, sacred or profane, it will, I conceive, be difficult to find one so noble, or so disinterested, as that of Moses. His attachment to the people over whom he presided, presents his character in a most amiable point of view. When the displeasure of the Almighty was manifested against them, after their idolatrous conduct at Mount Sinai, how forcibly did he intercede in their favour! "Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin: and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy Book which thou has written." On another occasion, when the Almighty threatened the destruction of the Israelites; and even offered to make of him "a greater nation, and mightier than they;" how nobly did he sacrifice every view that ambition might have opened, to the Love of his God, and the Love of his People! After powerfully interceding, from various considerations, that they might again be forgiven, he obtained this gracious answer to his prayer: "I have pardoned according to thy word."

Numerous are the instances of Patriotism which the Old Testament affords. The Book of Psalms, whilst it holds out a further, and more spiritual meaning, derives many of its excellencies from that amor

patrice,* which influenced the minds of its writers: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem! let my right hand forget her cunning: If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." So far, indeed was an attachment to the country in which Providence has placed us, inculcated among the Jews, that they were required, when taken captive to another land, to seek the peace of the city whither they were carried; and to pray to the Lord for it: "For, says the prophet Jeremiah, in the peace thereof ye shall have peace."

Nor is it only in the more circumscribed dispensation of the Jewish law, that a predilection for our country is evinced. We find, that even in inculcating the great truths of the Christian Religion, this predilection is manifest. He who was prophesied of, as "a Light to enlighten the Gentiles, and for salvation to the ends of the earth;" even "He came to his own; though his own [in general] received him not." His personal appearance and ministry were confined to his own country, whose miseries he foresaw and lamented, with all the tenderness of which humanity is capable. He even wept at the prospect which presented itself before

* The Love of our Country.

him : and, at another time, lamented over the city, in this moving language : " O Jerusalem ! Jerusalem ! How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings ; but ye would not." Thus did our blessed Redeemer manifest his solicitude for the welfare of the country in which he lived, when on earth ; and where he finished the work which was given him to do.

We likewise find the apostles of our Lord, both before and after his crucifixion, first and principally laboured to propagate the gospel of Christ among their own people, the Jews. Even Paul the great apostle of the Gentiles, when he entered into those places where Jews resided, first directed his gospel labours to them : and such was his patriotism : such his love to his country and people ; that he could not only say, " My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel, is, that they might be saved ;" but with a love, as ardent as it was pure, also declared ; " I could wish myself accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh ; who are Israelites ;—whose are the fathers : and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came ; who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

MISCELLANEOUS
AND
CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

SINCE drawing up this Compendium of Religious and Moral Duties, it has appeared proper to take notice of a few subjects, which did not seem to come under any of the foregoing heads, and which I shall therefore include in one Chapter of Miscellaneous and Concluding Observations.

The first subject is, a light and irreverent use of the sacred name. This is an evil sorrowfully prevalent among the professors of Christianity. It is not only practised in that profane swearing, which stamps ignominy on the conduct of many persons, in the different stations of life, and is a direct violation of the repeated command, "Swear not at all," in the most limited construction of it; but we also find, in common conversation, many who would be thought respectable for their religion and virtue, carelessly and unnecessarily making use of one or another of the Divine appellations, in

clear opposition to that commandment; which says, "Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

It may also be proper to impress the mind of the reader, with the importance of associating with suitable companions; and with the evils resulting from improper connexions and acquaintance. To reason on the propriety of the one, or on the impropriety of the other, seems to be superfluous; as the consequences are so evident, that even those, who are far from being properly careful in these points of conduct, will frequently recommend them to the attention of others. There are, however, some passages in Holy Writ, so applicable to this subject, and so impressive of its importance, that I trust the recital of them will be beneficial: "Blessed, says the Psalmist, is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." In another place he says: "I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers, and will not sit with the wicked." Solomon delivers some excellent cautions on this subject: "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not."

Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. He that walketh with wise men, shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge. He that is a companion of riotous men, shameth his father; and he that followeth after vain persons, shall have poverty enough." To these exhortations and observations, we may add the following, from the first Epistle to the Corinthians: "I have written unto you, not to keep company: if any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one, no not to eat. Be not deceived; evil communications corrupt good manners."

Intimately connected with the company which we keep, are the books that we read; and all the good or evil consequences resulting from the former, are equally applicable to the latter. When we consider the profusion with which books are now circulated; and how they meet us in almost every situation; it requires great care that our selection of them be such, as is not likely to impede, but will rather promote, our progress in religion and virtue.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS. 165

It is of great importance to our religious and moral improvement, that we stand open to the advice and reproof of our friends; and, even if we should think them severe upon us, not to reject nor resent their admonitions. From the very censures of an enemy, much benefit may be derived, by a mind desirous of improvement. "Open rebuke is better than secret love," is an observation made by one, whose character stands pre-eminent for wisdom and knowledge. Much, indeed, depends on the right reception of advice. "He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction; but he that refuseth reproof, erreth. Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction; but he that regardeth reproof, shall be honoured. A fool despiseth his father's instruction; but he that regardeth reproof, is prudent." Wherefore, "Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayst be wise in thy latter end;" for "he that being often reproofed, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

To these admonitions may be added the example of the Psalmist, when he expresses himself thus: "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head; for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamity."

There are likewise many exhortations in the Holy Writ, respecting the administering of advice ; but they may all be summed up in one, contained in the first Epistle to the Church at Thessalonica : " Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly ; comfort the feeble-minded ; support the weak ; be patient towards all men." When these duties are faithfully and properly discharged, and supported by a correspondent conduct, those who perform them are a blessing to mankind ; and ought, as well as those " who labour in the word and doctrine, to be esteemed very highly in love, for their work's sake."

Civility, or good manners, though one of the minor duties, is of no small importance in our passage through life. When we are in the company of virtuous persons, it is peculiarly proper to treat them with respect ; and this duty, on such occasions, is admitted to be of indispensable obligation. But even when our necessary concerns lead us among persons whose characters are exceptionable, they are entitled to civil behaviour ; and our influence with them is promoted by showing it. If we should think it necessary to manifest our disapprobation of their principles or conduct, it should be done consistently with good manners, as well as in a christian spirit. Indeed

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS. 167

if our minds were imbued with that meekness and humility, which have already been inculcated, we should very rarely, if ever, violate the rules of civility. But a separate consideration of this duty seemed proper, because some persons, who possess many virtuous qualities, are not sufficiently attentive to it. Let such remember the scriptural exhortations: "Be pitiful, be courteous; not returning railing for railing. Honour (or respect) all men. Condescend to men of low estate."

Our blessed Lord, when inculcating the duty of humility, shows its influence upon good manners; and the following direction, respecting one part of our conduct in company, deserves attention particularly by persons in the early part of life: "When thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room, (or place;) that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, friend, go up higher: so shalt thou have worship (or respect) in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee."

The means adapted to promote our improvement in piety and virtue, are of great importance; and claim a particular consideration in this place. A strict attention to the duties of religion, must be allowed to be essential for obtaining a blessing on our endeavours after a state of Divine accept-

ance, and moral usefulness. Of these duties, religious meditation, watchfulness, and prayer, claim our principal attention: these should be accompanied with a close and impartial self-examination, how far our hearts and conduct are regulated according to the doctrines and precepts of the gospel, and are under the influence of that Divine grace, or, Holy Spirit, the assistance of which is necessary for every good word and work. An attendance on public worship, and embracing every suitable opportunity of obtaining religious and moral instruction, will also be greatly conducive to that improvement, the means of promoting which, we are now considering. To these may be added, the society of persons of piety, virtue, and wisdom; and the perusal of books, tending to promote attainments of so great importance. Of these books, I scarcely need say, that the Holy Scriptures claim an unrivalled pre-eminence.

Industry is also a great friend to virtue; and learning has been, not without reason, called, the handmaid of religion. But, when the mind is absorbed, either in business or in learning; and, they, instead of being subordinate, are made principal objects: they then lose their beneficial effects, and frequently lead into a state of alienation from the inexhaustible source of every good.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS. 169

and perfect gift. Learning and Industry, when properly regulated, are, however, attended with so many beneficial consequences, that I cannot but recommend them among the means, at least, of preventing those evils, which arise from idleness, and want of employment. Learning, when rightly pursued and directed, also strengthens and enlarges the mind. It produces an acquaintance with the works of God in the creation; and is exceedingly useful in obtaining a more accurate knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, by reading them in the original tongues; circumstances, which may be made very beneficial, in promoting the cause of religion and virtue. Yet, let those who are disposed to pursue learning, remember, that "Knowledge [alone] puffeth up;" and that it ought, therefore, to be mixed with that Charity, which not only edifieth, but sanctifieth; and directs all our acquirements to these most important objects, the glory of God, and the good of our fellow creatures.

In writing this work, the words of the Psalmist, in an address to the Almighty, have frequently been brought to my remembrance: "Thy commandment is exceeding broad." Extensive, indeed, is the field of labour, which a proper attention to duty opens before us. Reflection and action,

are both called into use ; and, when united under the influence of Divine grace, will not fail of producing " fruit unto life eternal." But wide and extensive as our duties are, they are so simple, and so reasonable, that I apprehend the propriety of those which are inculcated in this volume, will scarcely be controverted by any individual ; at least, not by any who lays claim to the name of a Christian ; and, I trust, it will be universally admitted, that where these duties are properly regarded, the great essentials of the christian character are attained. They are duties becoming rational and immortal spirits. If the practice of them is, at times, difficult and laborious, means are afforded, more than equal to this difficulty and labour. " My grace is sufficient for thee," is applicable to every true believer in Christ, in all times of trial and temptation ; and they who live under the influence of this grace, can at times say, " We are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Notwithstanding all the exercises to which the christian traveller is subject, the mortification and self-denial which an attention to religious and moral duties may require, are not so great as are often imposed upon men, by a pursuit of the vain and sinful pleasures of the world. The present enjoyments, and the future prospects of the humble christian,

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS. 171

are of so exalted a nature, that this world has nothing to put in competition with them, but what may be considered as vanity ; and often worse than vanity, vexation of spirit. To the obedient and subjected mind, the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. The work of righteousness shall be peace ; and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever."

Having now finished these miscellaneous remarks, I shall conclude with the following exhortations of an inspired apostle : They form a kind of recapitulation of the duties which have been inculcated in this volume, and may not improperly close these humble endeavours, for the promotion of the cause of religion and virtue ; a cause, dignified with immortality, and crowned with eternal life : " Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. See that none render evil for evil unto any man ; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore ; pray without ceasing ; in every thing give thanks ; for this is the will of God in Christ

Jesus, concerning you. Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesying; prove all things; hold fast that which is good; and the very God of peace sanctify you wholly. And I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, may be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."



ERRATA.

P. L.

- 3 — 15 become, *read* became.
 62 — 1 not be, *read* not to be
 76 — 5 Moses', *read* Moses's
 — 14 said, *read* saith
 124 — 13 adultrass, *read* adulteress
 156 — 22 concience, *read* conscience

In some copies there are also a few imperfect letters & periods, which the sense will supply.

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